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CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954)  
by Ted A. Bohus and Bill Chancellor



# Scarlet Letters

*Scarlet Street* #46 deserves a place in the upper echelon of "best issues," starting with the strikingly beautiful cover (the finest rendition of Blackie Lagoon to grace the front of a magazine yet).

Thoroughly enjoyed the excellent coverage of the Black Lagoon series. How you guys are able to mine well-trod territory and come up with new, fascinating insights is beyond me. Frankly, I've never lent much credence to the intellectualization of this series; from the original through the second sequel, I've always found these films strictly kiddie matinee pabulum. But Erich Kuersten's enlightening insights made my previous bias worth reconsidering—at least, in regards to the original and *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US*. (Nobody on God's green earth could convince me that *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* is anything but pure hokum, and unappetizingly sexist hokum at that.) Still, the underwater photography, cozily familiar music score (with cues from *THE WOLF MAN* and *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* to boot!), and nonstop action make it mindless fun—not to underestimate the charms of lovely Lori Nelson. (What her character saw in the always pallid and slightly foolish-looking John Agar with hunky John Bromfield lurking about is anyone's guess.)

Can't wait to read Ken Hanke's take on the vastly underrated Columbia horror films in *SS* #47!

John Brunas  
Palisades Park, NJ

A positive "review" from one of the authors of *Universal Horrors* (McFarland & Co., 1990) is praise indeed. And the wait is over—the second installment of *COLUMBIA HORRORS* is in this very issue.

The time has come, the Walrus said, to heap more praise on *Scarlet Street*, but this time it's all accolades for your wondrous web site. Even with an advertisement in every issue of *Scarlet Street* telling us where to go [www.scarletstreet.com], I never got around to checking it out until this month when I had some time off for the holidays. I could kick myself for missing out on so much for so long! Now I know what I'm going to be doing between issues of my favorite magazine—reading your busy, fact-filled message boards (with so many industry professionals dropping by—Clive Merrison is one of my favorite Sherlock Holmeses, and there he was); ordering back issues, compact discs, and DVDs from your online store; and reading the splendid articles and interviews.

Speaking of your online interviews, the never-before-published one with Kate Phillips (the former actress, Kay Linaker) is one of the best chats with a Hollywood veteran I've ever read, with simply scads of fascinating information about people

like Warner Oland, Keye Luke, Steve McQueen, Tod Browning, James Whale, and many others. It wasn't exactly news that Oland was a boozier, but Ms. Phillips offered a whole new take on Whale and Browning, one that completely rewrites horror movie history. Leonard J. Kohl is to be profusely back-patted for conducting this interview and knowing the right questions to ask, and *Scarlet Street* is to be congratulated for premiering such stunning work on its site.

I promise, I'll be a regular visitor to the "Scarlet Web" from now on!

Freddy Harling  
Washington, DC

Freddy, quite a few online readers were pleased with our groundbreaking exclusive interview with Kate Phillips, including the following reader from New England....

Thank you very much for the interview. It all looks lovely and is certainly very well done, and I'll be looking forward to the expanded version in the magazine.

Kate Phillips  
Keene, NH

Considering your career includes appearing in several Charlie Chan movies, working twice with James Whale, and writing the fifties sci-fi classic *THE BLOB*, we should be thanking you for the interview—and we do! The expanded print version is scheduled for *Scarlet Street* #50.

*Scarlet Street* #46 instantly became one of my very favorite *Scarlet* issues ever! As

**WANTED! MORE PROFESSORS LIKE...**



**Russell Johnson**



a diehard *Creature* fan, I was wowed by the wall-to-wall Gill Man coverage. And I about fell on the floor laughing over the "Swimsuit Issue!" cover gag. The funniest thing I've seen since the famous "Tramp, Vamp, Damp" cover of *SS* #12.

Just a splendid issue. Keep up the great work, fellas!

Mark Clark  
Columbus, OH

I love this magazine. I was giddy as a schoolgirl when I got home Friday evening and found *Scarlet Street* #46 waiting for me in my mail box. My girlfriend snagged it from me as soon as I walked in the door—but I'd waited two months, so what was another two hours!

Once I got my paws on this issue, I turned immediately to the cover stories on *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. (Julie Adams! Hubba hubba!) They were simply outstanding from cover to cover. *Scarlet Street* really is a bright spot in my life every two months, but I do have one very slight criticism. Both my girlfriend and I were wondering why almost every article has to be continued later on in the back of the magazine. I know this is standard practice in many magazines (*Rolling Stone*, *Time*), but it bothers me with those publications as well. What is the reason for this? It seems to disrupt the flow of reading for me. I'm sure there is a practical reason for it, but I'm just not sure what it is.

Minor pet peeve aside, it was an amazing issue and I'm already spreading the word of *Scarlet Street* to all of my friends. When my brother comes to visit, one of his first questions is, "You get the new issue of *Scarlet Street* yet?"

Keep up the good work!

Gregg Anderson  
Surrey, BC

P.S. Richard Valley for President!

I like the sound of that. In answer to your question—there are a number of reasons for continuing an article at the back of the mag. For one thing, to have too long a stretch of the same material sometimes discourages people from buying an issue. They leaf through it and, if they're not interested in a particular topic, put it back on the stand. So it's bad to have too much of the same thing in one section. For another, color pages fall on certain pages in any given issue. If we choose, say, page four for color, that means certain other pages have to be in color. And if we want color

*Continued on page 10*



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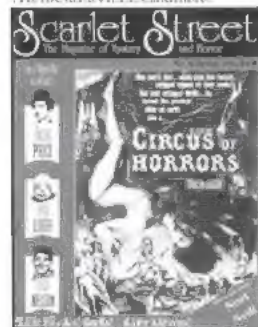
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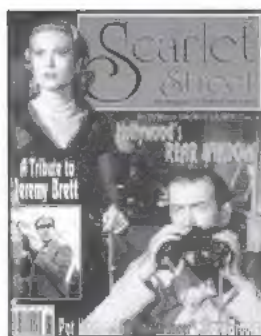


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Buzzin' your way soon—Scarlet Street unzips THE FLY for a full examination of the original film, its two sequels, the remake, and the remake's sequel . . . !



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### SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

for a particular article, we have to fit the article to those specific pages.

After searching various bookstores/magazine shops in PA and MD, we finally found the "Swimsuit Issue" of *Scarlet Street*! It is absolutely one of the best issues you have ever put out! The stills are great, and I've really enjoyed the interviews, especially Ben Chapman. Ricou Browning, at the end of his interview, comes across as a bit of an ass, but then I've always pictured him this way. One fan's opinion is that Mr. Chapman and Mr. Hennesy are absolutely right; you don't sign pictures that aren't you. My Boris Karloff autograph wouldn't mean nearly as much to me if it were on a photo of Glenn Strange!

Your magazine is the finest of its genre being published. I have rarely been disappointed in an issue. As for the gay agenda, I think it's great that the magazine appeals to a wide and varied audience. Hopefully, we'll all get to the point someday where *Scarlet Street* is just regarded as a great magazine and doesn't need any type of label. Kudos to you and your talented staff; I look forward to the next issue. (After all this running around this weekend, my husband has decided I need a subscription for Christmas!)

Michelle Dorn

williamhenrypratt@hotmail.com

Let's remind those of you who haven't yet subscribed to *Scarlet Street* that, by doing so, you'll be giving more money directly to the publication, helping us to stay in business for many more years to come. You'll also be saving yourselves a tidy sum, as a glance at our Subscription Special on page six will reveal.

*Scarlet Street* #46 is—in two words—literally breathtaking, not only in terms of content, but in terms of design and color, too. I read the entire magazine in one week and I did not want to put it down. I'm thinking of buying several more copies, because issue #46 will be a classic!

Thanks so much for interviewing David Drake. I recently watched the DVD presentation of his Off-Broadway hit, *THE NIGHT LARRY KRAMER KISSED ME*, a performance that is finally preserved on film. And thanks, too, for the excerpt from David J. Skal's book on Halloween—this was truly fascinating reading.

The DVD reviews were wonderful, too, and John F. Black is still doing it to me—getting me interested in films that I wouldn't otherwise think twice about. He's providing an invaluable service for us *Scarlet Streeters*.

In his obituary list (*Scarlet Street* #45), the *News Hound* mentions the death of actor George Nader, who was one of Universal-International's greatest discoveries in the long-ago fifties. According to *The New York Times* obituary, he was merely a "beefcake actor" who appeared

in a string of campy movies, but, seriously, the obituary represents his film career in a most unflattering light.

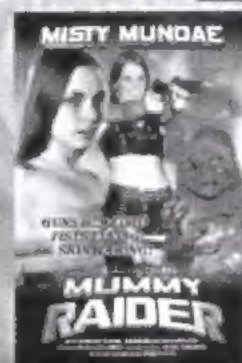
The *Times* devoted too much space to the film that put Nader on the map—1953's 3-D atrocity *ROBOT MONSTER*. It went into Tinseltown's record books, because it was made in four days for only \$16,000 and went on to make \$1 million. After securing a contract with U-I, Nader won a 1955 Golden Globe award as Most Promising Newcomer and went on to prove his worth in a series of films. In movies that are largely forgotten today—*CONGO CROSSING*, *FOUR GIRLS IN TOWN*, *THE UNGUARDED MOMENT*, and *AWAY ALL BOATS*—Nader exuded without the slightest effort a very rugged masculine appeal and held plot lines together through the magic of his talent and likability. (His greatest performance might've been in Hedy Lamarr's last film, *THE FEMALE ANIMAL*, a film that is constantly maligned.)

When his movie career went into decline (a situation that wasn't due, despite rumors, to a supposed *Confidential* exposé of his homosexuality), Nader turned to television and appeared in three series, *THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ELERY QUEEN* (1958-59), *MAN AND THE CHALLENGE* (1959-60), and *SHANNON* (1961-62), made two noteworthy appearances on *ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRE-*

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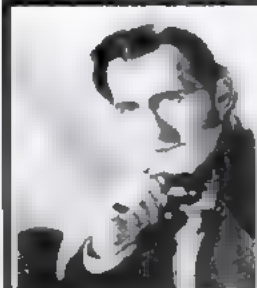
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# Frankly Scarlet

As we raise a glass to celebrate our 12th Anniversary and enter our 13th year of publishing *Seinfeld Street*, we've received a wonderful gift—the recovery of Forrest Ackerman from the near-fatal health horrors he suffered last year and the return of his *Crimes Against Comedy* column to our increasingly colorful pages!

Without the crafty creation of the original comic *Monsters of Talent* by editor Jerry and publisher James Warner, it's doubtful that there would ever have been a *Seinfeld Street*. Along with the release of Universal's classic fright flicks to TV (resulting in multibillion SHOCK THEATERS sprouting throughout the land, hosted by such now-iconic figures as Zachary and Vampire) and the arrival of fresh blood from Hammer Films and American International Pictures at local passion pits, *FM*'s late fifties advent set off a Monster Boom for baby boomers that reverberates to this day.

Uncle Forry has had to downsize a little, selling his multi-roomed Ackerman mansion and moving into what he calls his Ackerman-mansion, where he's comfortably ensconced with the prize pieces of his celebrated memorabilia collection. Here you'll find him warmly greeting his fans and singing his favorite Jolson tunes. Forry's outlook is forever young and positive

and life-affirming. (Would you expect less from the man who hosts *Tom Chaney Show: Not Dead?* As he told me recently: "Richard, it's nice to be back in the harness again after almost meeting Prince Sirka.")

And it's sure nice to have him back, too.

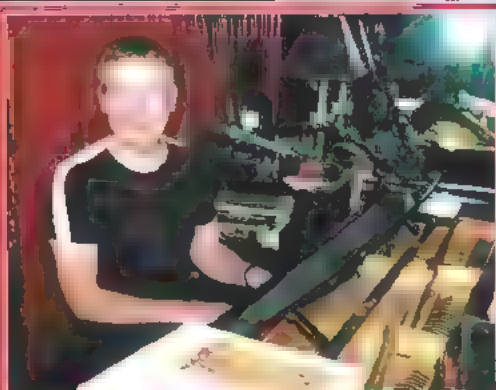
It's no secret to readers of this column that man aging editor Tom Amorosi and I are piano-bar addicts and were hit hard a few years ago when our favorite Greenwich Village nightspot, Eighty Fights, shut its doors. It was the day the music died—and we despaired of ever finding another's charming home. We have, though! We have—and let there be dancing in the streets (it's gotta be in the streets, 'cause they don't allow dancing in doors.) For the past two years, we've been Saturday night regulars at Don't Tell Mama at 343 West 46th Street, where the back rooms feature the best of today's cabaret performers and the front barrens leads to the spectacular pit, a la playing of the magic-fingered Bobby Peacock (pictured Top Right) and the equally spectacular warbling of singers/writers/bartenders A.J. from Jennifer Kruskamp, Anne Steele, Jennifer Pace, Tracy Reynolds, Heidi Wehmuehler, and George Sanders. That's right; George Sanders—but not the one who was such a cad to Joan Fontaine in *REBECCA*. Don't Tell Mama's George is the guy wearing the slice of cheese in the photo beneath Bobby's, which is something the other Sanders never did.

In public.

The music is a delirium of Broadway, pop, and a dollop of country—sometimes all three at once—and you'll be doing yourself a favor if you request "My Favorite Year" from A.J., "Goldfinger" from Jennifer, "Fifty Percent" from Tracy, "Part of Your World" from Anne, and "That's Amore" from George. If you stop by on a Saturday night, you'll probably find me and Tom at one of the tables. If you arrive late, look under the tables.

Pursuing our musical theme, I want to recommend the periodic Musicals in Multi produced by The York Theatre Company in New York's Theatre at Saint Peter's at 619 Lexington Avenue. What's a Musical in Multi, you ask? I'll tell you. It's a musical performed as a staged concert reading—no costumes, no sets, and the actors perform with script in hand. Now, that might not sound like much, but when you do it as well as the York Theatre you often wind up with an evening's entertainment the equal of those overpriced behemoths currently cluttering the Manhattan theater scene.

And speaking of behemoths, what could possibly be a bigger, bolder brassier extravaganza from Broadway's Golden Age than the last show ever to play the legendary 3,500-seat Hippodrome—1935's *THE MBO* produced by the rarely humble Bitly



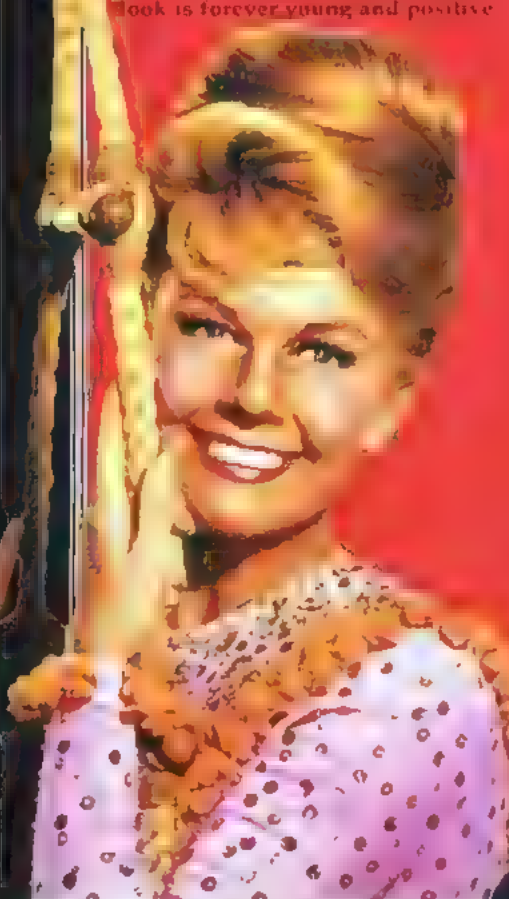
Rose, directed by George Abbott, with a book by Fen Hecht and Charles MacArthur, hit songs by Richard Rodgers and Larry Hart, and a star turn by Jimmy Durante. *THE MBO* was so gigantic a show that it's never been revived. The 1962 movie (retitled *BILLY ROSE'S JUMBO* at the insistence of guess who?) is a particular favorite of *Seinfeld Street*, a very underrated film musical that brought back Durante and teamed him with Doris Day (pictured Bottom Left), Stephen Boyd, and the wonderful Martha Raye.

Now, it's one thing to present a Musical in Multi performance of, say, *YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN*—which, even in a full production, requires little in the way of set, and costumes—but it's rather a greater challenge to make an audience forget that a show had in the title role, an elephant. The York Theatre managed it. In fact, in the fine comic playing of Michael McGrath, they almost made us forget Durante! (McGrath captured the comic style of the famed Schnozzle Face, without ever resorting to Schnozzle impersonation.)

Be sure to check out the York Theatre Company's upcoming shows at [www.yorktheatre.org](http://www.yorktheatre.org). They'll put a song in your heart.

Ed Deane

Cherry







# ANCHOR BAY NEWS

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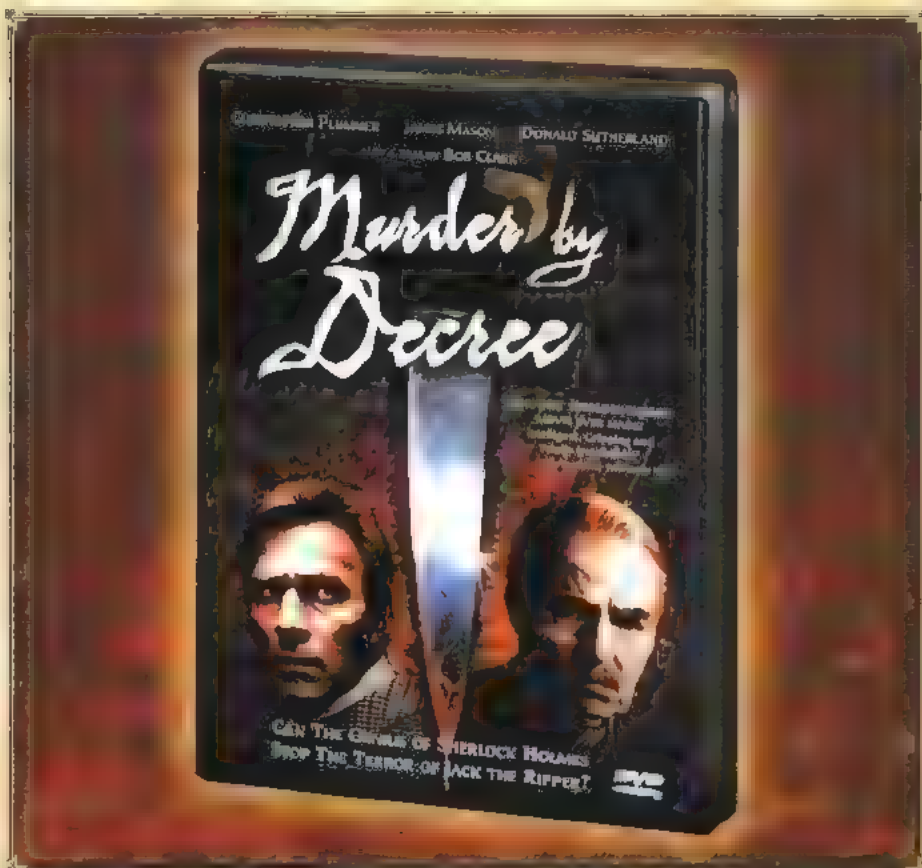


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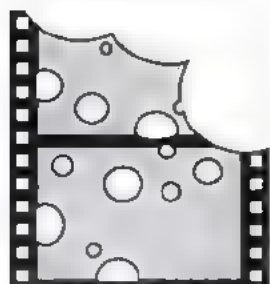
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#### SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 10

SENTS (1961's "Self Defense" and 1962's "Where Beauty Lies"), and was a continuing guest star (17 times!) on THE LORRETTA YOUNG SHOW (1953-61). Later, he ventured to England, where he made the superb film noir NOWHERE TO GO, and THE MILLION EYES OF SUMURU. Then he traveled to Germany and made quite a splash in a series of thrillers in which he played FBI agent Jerry Cotton.

In the mid seventies, Nader was in a serious car accident, which left him with an eye injury that put a stop to his acting career—he could no longer tolerate the bright lights that are an essential part of film production. He focused his efforts on writing science fiction, at which he became successful. His best known work is *Chrome* (1978), which is now a subject for study in college English courses.

George Nader, his lifelong partner, Mark Miller (who later became Rock Hudson's secretary); and Tom Clark, Rock Hudson's personal manager (who later became his lover); formed Hudson's much needed "family unit" for most of Hudson's adult life. In genuine gratitude, Nader became the chief beneficiary of Hudson's \$14 million estate (with a \$500,000 annual cap).

Nader left behind a huge portfolio of beefcake photos, but my favorite Nader photo is the one that captures a really joyous water skiing excursion between him and Hudson—friends to the end, to be sure.

Raymond Banack  
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Lagoonaatics, I just wanted to let you know that your Swimsuit Issue made me wet with joy. The amount of information on the three Creature features made my head swim. And I think you should be commended for the incredible variety of photos that flooded the issue, including those semi costumed shots of the three living Creatures.

If I must be a drip about something, then I should point out that some of us codgers don't have 20/20 vision anymore, making it a bit difficult to read the copy against some of the dark backgrounds that were designed for the issue. And I'm sure that CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON was not Universal's biggest hit of 1954, as Michael Michalski states in his article, since both THE GLENN MILLER STORY and MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION were far and away the biggest money makers for the studio that year. But these are minor quibbles (which I think was Minor Watson's real name before he anglicized it).

Anyway, I "shore" want to thank you. It's the "moist" I could do

Gilbert Mann  
Waterbury, CT  
Gilbert Mann, eh? Waterbury huh? Well, not that we're the least big suspicious.

Received the new Swimsuit Issue (SS #46) and would like to make a correction. On page 31, it's Ricou Browning in the costume. Ben Chapman showed me this picture in his collection, and told me it was during the time Ricou came out to California for a test fitting. And the picture to the left of that one is also Ricou—the only "out of water shot" for the ori-

ginal promotional pictures. Thought you would like to know.

Bill "Drac" Edwards  
Fright Factory Outlet

I recently purchased *Scarlet Street* #46, and I can't put it down. I love it very much. It had in it the first ever interview I have seen done with Tom Hennesy as the Gill Man on land from REVENGE OF THE CREATURE. I truly love your magazine! I'm hooked!

Kyle Nance  
labonte29379@yahoo.com

Recently received *Scarlet Street* #46, my first subscription issue. It is certainly packed full of info—the Creature Trilogy stuff looks particularly interesting. The DVD reviews are very handy, especially for the more obscure (to me) films like WAR GODS OF THE DEEP.

A really fascinating read was David J Skel's piece on Halloween. We don't celebrate Halloween at all in Australia, so this was very enlightening. I have to say, as a Halloween novice, that scheduling my first visit to the US for two weeks coinciding with October 31 made for quite a shock to the system! It took me about six doubletakes on the subway, in the street, in shops, before I realized the people I kept seeing with gashes, open wounds, and glass sticking out of their foreheads were actually "made up." Well, duh, you might say—but when you're not expecting it.

I also picked up a copy of a previous issue (*Scarlet Street* #39) at the Chiller Convention. Loved Richard Valley's article on "Ygor the Cock-Eyed Optimist." It's hard



to find a fresh slant on some of these old movies which have been analyzed to death, but you sure found it!

Al Paige  
Blackheath, Australia

It was Summer 1994 (*Scarlet Street* #15) when you printed Joe Collura's informative article BOY MEETS APE MAN: THE SWINGING CAREER OF JOHNNY SHEFFIELD. It was 1999 (SS #33) when we requested another Johnny Sheffield article, and you promised to "get back to Bomba in due time." Is it "due time" yet?

In the meantime, we came across Matt Winans' extensive "Bomba Speaks" interview in the Bomba movie guide on the Internet. Recently, we rechecked Matt's site and learned about Bantu, the Zebra Boy (Johnny's character from the original, unsold, mid-fifties TV pilot). We are big fans of Johnny Sheffield the actor (as Boy, Bomba, and Bantu) and the man (as evidenced by his kindness and consideration in remembering his many fans).

We like you too, *Scarlet Street*, but how about an article (with photos) devoted to the Bomba films? Any word yet about Bomba DVDs?

Grant Lloyd and Jim Clatfelter  
mwinans@tarzanmovieguide.com

Bantu the Zebra Boy? Johnny was putting on a few pounds by the mid-fifties, let's hope he didn't wear his stripes horizontally. There's no word on Bomba DVDs (no legitimate word, anyway), and, though we will be getting back to Bomba, it's not quite due time

Once again, a great job on the most recent issue. The extensive coverage of the Creature films is precisely the reason that *Scarlet Street* continues to be such a winner. As a horror film follower since the days of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, I've had more than my fill of rehashings and redundant articles dredging up the same old tired and familiar material. Your in-depth profiling and interviews with people like John Bromfield, Julia Adams, and Lori Nelson (not to mention Gill Guys Ben Chapman, Ricou Browning, and Tom Hennessy)—enhanced by great photographic coverage and a handsome graphic layout—keeps me coming back for more.

Just a wonderful job all the way around. Keep em' comin'!

Bruce Dettman  
San Francisco

You'd be surprised to learn how many reactionary horror fans want only to hear the same material over and over again. Bruce, sure, it's fun to rehash old topics of discussion, but we like to think that *Scarlet Street* has a more broad-minded, curious, sophisticated readership, one that's less threatened by something so radical as a new idea.

Terrific interview with Kate Phillips on the *Scarlet Street* website! The image of Tod Browning farming within potato-throwing distance of MGM added a dimension to the usual view of a bitter recluse. Some people do get out because it's not fun anymore, and he clearly preferred to sell produce than work for Louis B. Mayer (although he exchanged letters

with Lon Chaney Jr. in the fifties about directing a big-budget Western).

James Whale's erratic behavior makes me wonder about his emotional state in general. Might mental illness be his primary secret? A gay lifestyle has long been common in theater and movies, being certifiable really would frighten the horses

Ted Newsom  
Burbank, California

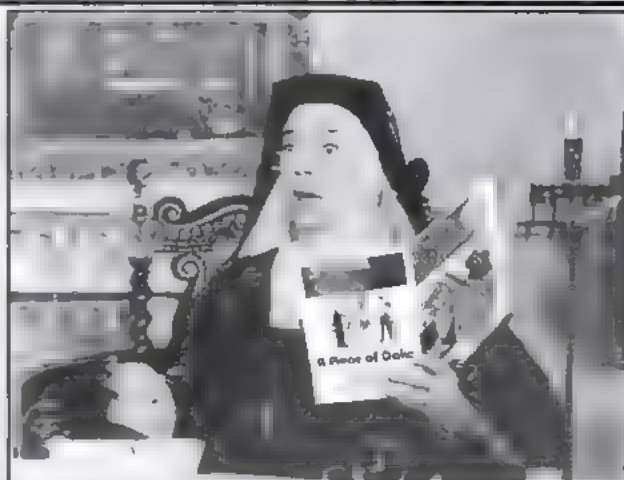
I just wanted to drop you guys a line and tell you how great your magazine and website are! All of it's such a class act. The recent interview online with Kay Linaker/Kate Phillips by Leonard J. Kohl is one of the best, most insightful interviews of its type I've ever read. Kohl knew just what to ask and how to follow up on the answers. Bravo! I can't wait to read the entire interview in the magazine.

Nelson Grahame  
Whitehall, NY

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**Y**es, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds . . . nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

So, gang . . . now's your chance to get the *Scarlet Street* you've been missing! Just fill out the handy dandy coupon and we'll send you copies that, in the words of Ygor, are "broken, crippled, and distorted"—just a teensy bit.

**Saints preserve us! Reverend Mother is just bubbling over with joy and excitement at the prospect of getting back issues of *Scarlet Street* at a heavenly low price . . . !**

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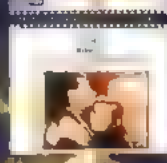
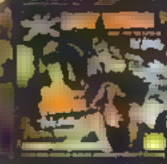
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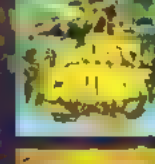
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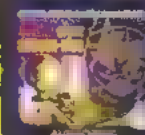
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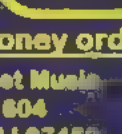
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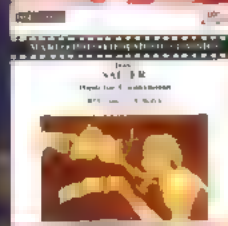
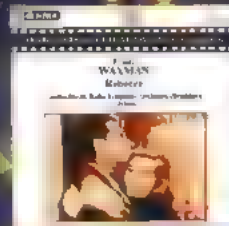
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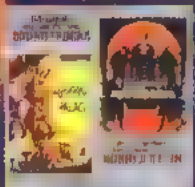




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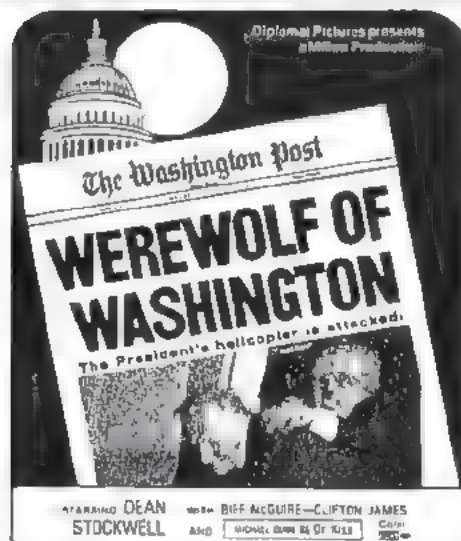


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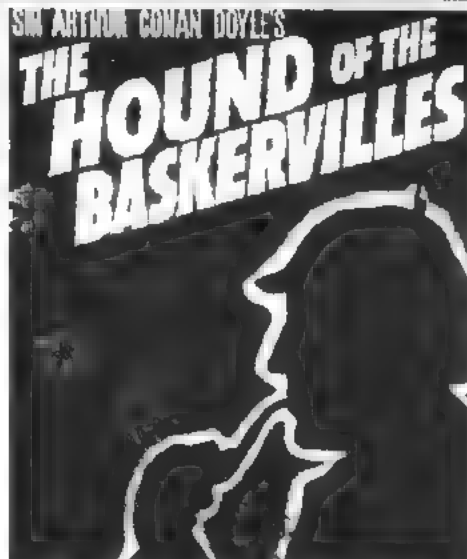
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## SCIENCE FICTION

**F.P.I. DOESN'T ANSWER\*** (1932) Conrad Veidt, J. E. Elmore. A giant floating platform is built in the mid-Atlantic for use as an oceanic bridge. However, construction seems arbitrary at the hands of foreign saboteurs. 16mm DVD item #39900 VHS item #39900

**PREHISTORIC WOMEN\*** (1930) Allan Nixon, Laurette Luez. Cave babes battle giants and dragons. Great scene where a giant cave-demon is freed. Color 35mm DVD item #30190 VHS item #30190

**WARNING FROM SPACE\*** (1956) Toyomi Kato, Kazuo Kawasaki. Starfish aliens warn humans of impending destruction. Good Japanese sci-fi. Color 16mm DVD item #50440 VHS item #50440

**TERROR IN THE MIDNIGHT SN\*** (1955) Robert Burton, Barbara Wilson, Stan Gester. Finally this movie makes sense! This is the original, non-lampered version of what was released here as *Invasion of the Animal People* without all those BORING Jerry-Weinstein inserted scenes with John Carradine. Scientists investigate the landing of an alien spaceship in Lapland. The aliens deposit a giant, furry monster that wreaks havoc. 35mm DVD item #52250 VHS item #52250

**PLANETA BURG\*** (1962) aka *PLANET OF STORMS* Vlasov. Tameless Gernad Verman. A foreign sci-fi classic! Communists land on Venus and find alien dangers. Visually stunning. Russian, subtitled in English. 35mm DVD item #51600 VHS item #51600

**GAMERA THE INVINCIBLE\*** (1966) Brian Donlevy, Albert Dekker. A flying turtle dinosaur! Cinema features a very unique way of getting rid of a monster. 16mm DVD item #50600 VHS item #50600

**WAR OF THE MONSTERS\*** (1958) Kojima Honda, Kyoko Enami. The sequel to *Gamera the Invincible* has Gamera—who was rocketed into space at the end of the first movie—being diverted back to Earth after a meteorite strikes his ship. Meanwhile, here comes Baragon, a giant lizard with horn spikes and a protective force field. Before long Gamera and Baragon are locked in mortal combat. Color 16mm DVD item #51250 VHS item #51250

**YONGARY, MONSTER FROM THE DEEP\*** (1968) On Young Il Nam Chung Im. A giant, terrible monster is literally rampaging Korea. Scientists discover that the only weapon that can stop him is a refrigerator. Get the big goofy monster he stopped in brief? Color, 16mm DVD item #51370 VHS item #51370

**ASSIGNMENT TERROR\*** (1968) aka *DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN* Michael Rennie, Paul Naschy. Rennie is an alien whose mission is to revive Earth's legendary monsters to assist him in an invasion of Earth. Frankenstein, Dracula, the Werewolf, and the Mummy. Color 16mm DVD item #52190 VHS item #52190

**PRIMAL IMPULSE\*** (1977) aka *BLOOD ON THE MOON* Florida Bofan, Klaus Kinski. An astronaut is purposely left on the moon as part of a bizarre experiment. Meanwhile a woman on Earth wakes to find that she has no memory of the last several days. What is the connection between her and the weird experiment? An engrossing combination of sci-fi, mystery, and psychological thriller elements. Color 35mm DVD item #51380 VHS item #51380

## HORROR THRILLERS

**DRUMS OF JEOPARDY\*** (1931) Warner Oland, Lloyd Hughes. Oland is a mad doctor hell-bent on revenge against the family that caused his daughter's death. Lab science, spooky houses, poison gas—a full-blooded horror gem! 16mm DVD item #40010 VHS item #40010

**VAMPIRE\*** (1932) Julian West. The use of light, shadow, and camera angles is translated into a purposeful of horror seldom equaled in this chilling vampire tale. 16mm DVD item #40080 VHS item #40080

**DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET\*** (1938) Tod Slaughter. Tod's best. Two maniacs murder for profit, hack the bodies, then use them in place. 16mm DVD item #45620 VHS item #45620

**HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES\*** (1936) aka *DER HUND VON BASKERVILLE* Bruce Guttery, Eric Cadden. This 1936 German version of the Conan Doyle classic is beautifully photographed and has a very classical sounding score. It boasts fine sets and develops its story line in misty, creepy surroundings. Although this version is in German with no subtitles anyone familiar with the tale will have no trouble following the story line. 16mm DVD item #42970 VHS item #42970

**THE HUMAN MONSTER\*** (1939) Bela Lugosi, Hugh Williams, Grazi Gyni. A great 30s shocker. Bela gleefully murders people and shows them out into the mud flats of the Thames. The setting is an eerie home for the living. 35mm DVD item #41110 VHS item #41110

**DAUGHTER OF HORROR\*** (1955) Adrienne Barbee, Bruno Vespa. A strange, fascinating film about a wandering girl who falls into a strange series of events that culminates with her saving off the hand of the man she has murdered. 16mm DVD item #41710 VHS item #41710

**THE SCREAMING SKULL\*** (1958) John Hudson, Peggy Webber. A great "B" horror film about a woman who is terrorized by her husband's first wife's skull. 16mm DVD item #40380 VHS item #40380

**INVASION OF THE VAMPIRES\*** (1961) Carolee Agos, Barbara Mott. An atmospheric vampire-in-a-castle tale featuring a misty cave full of coffins. Not bad. 16mm DVD item #40510 VHS item #40510

**THE SHE BEAST\*** (1956) Barbara Steele, John Karlton, Mel Welles. An 18th century witch, killed by villagers, comes back from the dead for revenge. Bar's car crashes into a lake and she becomes possessed by her. Color DVD item #53080 VHS item #53080

**HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES\*** (1968) Peter Cushing, Nigel Stock, Gary Raymond. Not to be confused with the 1959 Hammer version. The English movie reverberates with the baying sound of a monstrous creature, one that seems hell-bent on taking the life of Sir Henry Baskerville. Cushing is very effective as Sherlock Holmes. An interesting mixture of lapsed and filmed sequences. Memorable. Highly recommended. DVD item #42880 VHS item #42880

**FANGS OF THE LIVING DEAD\*** (1988) aka *MELNKA* Anita Eckberg. A woman inherits a medieval castle only to find that it's infested with vampires. Some truly gorgeous female vampires. Beautiful color and print. 35mm DVD item #42880 VHS item #42880

**BELL FROM HELL\*** (1970) Vlasov. Unders, Rensard, Verley, Alfredo Mayo. After being locked away for years, a man comes back to seek his bizarre revenge on his son and his three daughters who had him falsely institutionalized as a psycho. A very well made Euro-chiller. Color 16mm DVD item #43000 VHS item #43000

**NIGHT EVELYN CAME OUT OF THE GRAVE\*** (1971) Anthony Steffen, Erika Blanc. A psycho nurse whose son is tortured on to satisfy his sadistic cravings. His dead wife's ghost soon haunts him. R rated. Color 35mm DVD item #41800 VHS item #41800

**DR. JEKYLL VS. THE WEREWOLF\*** (1971) Paul Naschy, Jack Taylor. A man afflicted as a werewolf seeks a cure from Dr. Jekyll's grandson. Nice color. 16mm DVD item #40840 VHS item #40840

**THE VAMPIRE HAPPENING\*** (1971) Paddy Mayne, Pat Degener, Thomas Hunter. A woman goes to Transylvania to get a castle she's inherited. She unknowingly releases her vampire family members on the local populace! An amusing Euro horror-comedy. From 35mm DVD item #43610 VHS item #43610

**WEREWOLF OF WASHINGTON\*** (1973) Dean Stockwell, Bill McGuire, Jane Hooke, Clifton James. The President's press secretary is bitten by a werewolf in Hungary. He returns to D.C. and wreaks havoc. One cool scene has him attacking a woman in an overturned phone booth. The climax is great! This enjoyable chiller really pays homage to *The Wolf Man*. Color 16mm DVD item #41020 VHS item #41020

**THE SEVERED ARM\*** (1973) Deborah Walley, Paul Carr, Marvin Kaplan, David Carron. Six stranded mountain climbers amputate and eat the arm of one of their group. Six years later the other group members begin to meet horrible violent deaths. This is shockingly lovable, over-the-top horror oddity that would probably be rated R. Recommended. Color, 16mm DVD item #43020 VHS item #43020

**EERIE MIDNIGHT HORROR SHOW\*** (1974) aka *THE SEXORCIST* Stella Camarata, Chris Avram, Lucio Lovel. An art student purchases an ancient wooden crucifixion statue in a shocking scene it comes to life and rapes her. She later finds herself possessed by a demon. She is soon taken to a convent where an exorcism priest is brought in to free her from possession. Rated R for nudity, sexuality, and violence. Color, 35mm DVD item #43040 VHS item #43040

**THE KILLING OF SATAN\*** (1975) Ramon Ravilla, Elizabeth Cropper, George Estragan. The evil Prince of Magic rescues a Filipino village. When two girls are kidnapped, a young man is called home to take the place of the dying village wizard and save the girls. Aided by a magic staff he takes on the evil prince and eventually Satan himself in an exciting duel of magic. Rated R for nudity and violence. Color 35mm DVD item #43050 VHS item #43050

**HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES\*** (1978) Vasily Livanov, Vasily Solomin. We're going all out for all of you Holmes fans. That's right, three versions of the Baskerville classic for you to digest and compare. This version was filmed in Russia and comes sub-titled in English. Color 35mm DVD item #43060 VHS item #43060





**FABIOLA\*** (1951) Michele Morgan Henri Vidal Michel Simon Before Steve Reeves and Hercules there was Fabiola, the granddaddy of all Italian sociologic films. Intrigue abounds as mercenary Romans plot against Christians. 16mm DVD item #5563D VHS item #5563

**REVENGE OF THE MUSKETEERS\*** (1960) Fernando Lamas Gloria Muard Despite the efforts of his musketeer pals, D'Artagnan escorts a youthful king right into the hands of an evil cardinal who has wicked plans for him. However, the musketeers save the king from his clutches and unite against his power. Holey but fun. Color 16mm DVD item #55120D VHS item #55120

**THE MONGOLS\*** (1960) Jack Palance Anja Eckberg Palance plays the son of Genghis Khan while Eckberg is the lady he lusts for. A mammoth spectacle piece with lots of excitement and plenty of cut-throat battles. Color 16mm DVD item #55530D VHS item #55530

**HERCULES & THE CAPTIVE WOMEN\*** (1961) Reg Park Ray Spain Hercules finds himself in Atlantis fighting dragons, an army of identical men and an evil queen. An excellent Technicolor fantasy. Technicolor 35mm scope DVD item #55020D VHS item #55020

**REVAK THE REBEL\*** (1962) Jack Palance Palance plays the son of a king. However, their sacred kingdom is taken over by the Carthaginians during the Carthage-Roman war. Jack is kidnapped and put on board a slave ship. He later escapes and seeks revenge on the Carthaginians. Color 16mm DVD item #55121D VHS item #55121

**MEDUSA AGAINST THE SON OF HERCULES\*** (1962) aka Perseus the minotaur Richard Harrison Anna Ronal Perseus finds himself pitted against Medusa and her horrible stone men, also a horrible dragon. Color 16mm DVD item #55118D VHS item #55118

**GOLIATH AND THE SINS OF BABYLON\*** (1963) Mark Forest Our hero helps a small kingdom that is forced to make a yearly tribute of 30 young virgins to the Kingdom of Babylon. Partially letterboxed in scope. Color 16mm DVD item #55338D VHS item #55338

**THARUS, SON OF ATILA** (1963) Jeanne Courland Lisa Gaston Maymo Palmara Rik Von Nutter The story line takes place several years after Attila's death. His son Tharus is sent to infiltrate and enemy encampment. Unfortunately, he falls in love with the rival chieftain's daughter. But she has been promised in marriage to an evil warrior. Color from 35mm DVD item #55122D VHS item #55122

**SAMSON AND HIS MIGHTY CHALLENGE\*** (1964) Alan Steel This rare color Italian epic incorporates all the legends of Hercules: Samson, Morio and Urrus. The climax features a battle royal. Color from 16mm DVD item #5527D VHS item #5527

**CHALLENGE OF THE GLADIATORS\*** (1964) Rod Taylor Stevena Gloria Millard Marsh cruelty sweeps over Nero's corrupt Roman empire. Spartacus leads a slave revolt against the empire in this colorful spectacle. Color 16mm DVD item #55380D VHS item #55380

**SEVEN FROM THEBES** (1965) Andre Lawrence, Anna Martina Hordes of Spartan soldiers have ransacked Thebes. A group of seven Theban nobles decide to plan a series of attacks against them. The entire ringer scene boasts a great looking set. Color 16mm DVD item #55123D VHS item #55123

## JUNGLE THRILLERS

**ADVENTURE ISLAND\*** (1947) Roy Calhoun Ronda Fleming Noel Hall Alvin Karp Two exiles end up shipwrecked on a jungle island ruled by a madman who commits many atrocities, including executions, alligator pits, etc. 16mm DVD item #J028D VHS item #J028

**JOURNEY TO THE LOST CITY\*** (1958) Debra Paget Paul Christian Walter Rayer Debra is an explorer, covered by an evil madman. A daring adventure rescues her. Debra's erotic dance scene is very enticing. Color 16mm DVD item #J0330D VHS item #J0330

**UMOO OMOO, THE SHARK GOD\*** (1949) Ron Randall Jevorra Burton A solid "B" vodoo thriller about the curse of a shark god that follows the despoilers of a jungle. The curse is passed on from father to daughter. From 16mm DVD item #J029D VHS item #J029

**PIRAHNA\*** (1972) aka PIRANHA PIRANHA William Smith Peter Brown Anne Capri A girl's little jungle thriller that shows Smith's talent for playing badass heavies. A duo sets out to photograph wildlife in the Amazon jungle. To their horror, they end up becoming prey of a mad, cold-blooded hunter. Color 16mm DVD item #J068D VHS item #J068



## ACTION-ADVENTURE

NOTE: Action-Adventure titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted), plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

**TEN LAPS TO GO\*** (1938) Rex Lease, Myrna Evans, Duncan Renaldo A self-centered race car driver is injured, losing him his car and his girl. Later he becomes aware of an attempt to sabotage another car by his rival. 16mm DVD item #AA330D VHS item #AA330

**THE GLASS SPHINX\*** (1967) Robert Taylor Anja Eckberg A mummy movie with no mummy. A professor searches Egypt for the tomb of a pharaoh who had an elixir for eternal life. In his tomb is the priceless glass sphinx. Color DVD item #AA340D VHS item #AA340

## FORGOTTEN HORRORS

NOTE: Forgotten Horror titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted), plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

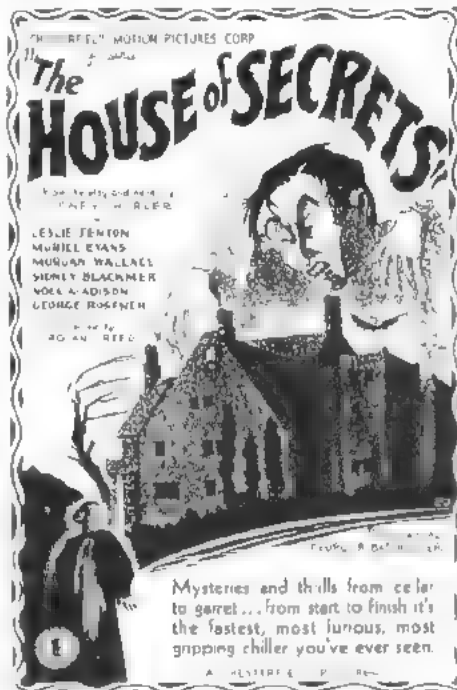
**THE INTRUDER\*** (1953) Monte Blue Lia Lee Shipwreck survivors land on a creepy island and discover a grave full of skeletons. A murder occurs. Some survivors flee into the jungle where they find a wild man and a killer ape. 16mm DVD item #FH63D VHS item #FH63

**THE MOONSTONE\*** (1934) David Manners, Phyllis Barry An adventurer and his Hindu servant deliver a fabled gem known as the Moonstone. On a creepy mansion during a wild storm. During the night the gem disappears. From 16mm DVD item #FH49D VHS item #FH49

**ONE FRIGHTENED NIGHT\*** (1935) Chatter Grapewick Velma Ford A top Masco thriller with the best opening title of any poverty row horror film. It is an old dark house horror story but done with a fine tongue-in-cheek approach. 16mm DVD item #FH24D VHS item #FH24

**HOUSE OF SECRETS\*** (1936) Leslie Fenton, Myrna Evans A well-made poverty row old dark house thriller with plenty of atmosphere. A young man inherits an eerie mansion that's filled with mystery and terror. From 16mm DVD item #FH36D VHS item #FH36

**DEATH FROM A DISTANCE\*** (1936) Russell Hopton, Lois Lane, George Manion An astronomical observatory is the scene of a mysterious murder. Some sci-fi elements. Hopton should have been given more leading roles. 16mm DVD item #FH32D VHS item #FH32



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## SPIES, ESPIONAGE, & INTRIGUE

**SECRET FILE 1413\*** (1960) Claudine Dupuis Jean Daniel Dana Doll Henri Vilbert A detective investigates the grisly murder of a woman. The trail leads him to dope peddling, blackmail and financial spying. From 16mm DVD item #SP63D VHS item #SP63

**THE SCARLET BARONNESS\*** (1961) Osa Oskars, Joachim Fuchsbauer Wera Prydzberg, Paul Dahlke A British agent is sent in to infiltrate a German atomic laboratory and steal top secret documents. The daughter of a secret service officer aids him. Lots of thrills in this well-made spy thriller. 16mm DVD item #SP44D VHS item #SP44

**RED DRAGON\*** (1967) Jonathan Greyer Rosanna Schallino Horst Farn, Stewart and Rosanna play secret agents in Hong Kong trying to crack a notorious smuggling ring. A big budget thriller. From a nice Technicolor 35mm print. DVD item #SP10D VHS item #SP10

## JUVENILE SCHLOCK

**TEENAGE BAD GIRL\*** (1957) Anna Neagle Sylvia Syms, Anita Cant seem to straighten out her wayward daughter. Her path eventually leads to crime, rebellion, death and redemption. Her sleazy boyfriend is a real problem. From 16mm DVD item #J512D VHS item #J512

**THE CHOPPERS\*** (1961) Arch Hall Jr. Marianne Gabe Bruno Ve Seta A great JD cheapie. A tough gang of teen hoodlums strip cars and terrorize townfolk. Gabe was a Playboy coverfod. Great drive-in fun. From 35mm DVD item #J514D VHS item #J514

**NIGHT OF EVIL\*** (1962) Lisa Gaye William Campbell A cheerleader gets raped, dumped by her folks, competes for Miss America, unknowingly marries a hoodlum, becomes a stripper and commits armed robbery. This is a very good low budget gem. Based on a true story. From 35mm DVD item #J506D VHS item #J506



## MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-CRIME-FILM NOIR

NOTE: Mystery-Suspense titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted), plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

**SIGN OF FOUR\*** (1932) Arthur Wontner, Lisa Evans Lon Hunter Wontner's third Holmes film. An ex-con seeks revenge on a man who took off with his share of loot. The plot chases down the Tharns in quite good. Recommended. 16mm DVD item #M328D VHS item #M328

**SHADOW OF SILK LENNOX\*** (1935) Commodore Lon Chaney Jr. Jack Mulhall Lon is an underworld crime boss and nightclub owner. After pulling a bank heist Lon murders one of his thugs who appears to be skipping town with the loot, but the money is not found on his body. With the cops figuring everything out before Lon gets his hands on the cash. 16mm DVD item #M327D VHS item #M327

**A MAN BETRAYED\*** (1938) Republic Eddie Nugent Kay Hughes Lloyd Hughes Eddie is a smooth-talking salesman for an oil firm who discovers his company's stock is phony. After one of the company's directors commits suicide, Eddie is framed as though he was the murderer. Recommended. 16mm DVD item #M328D VHS item #M328

**JIM HANVEY, DETECTIVE\*** (1937) Guy Kibbee Tom Brown Lucie Arnaz Edward Gargan An insurance company sends the services of an eccentric detective to track down jewel thieves. Kibbee in the role of a hilarious. This is a really cute mystery comedy from Republic. Recommended. From 16mm DVD item #M329D VHS item #M329

**AMATEUR CROOK\*** (1937) Victory Herman Bix Joan Barclay Monte Blue Joan steals a precious gem from a couple of loan sharks. Herman gets tangled up in her messy situation. A fun cheapie from Sam Katzman. 16mm DVD item #M331D VHS item #M331

**THE SHADOW STRIKES\*** (1937) Rod LaRocque Lynn Anders The Shadow tries to solve a mysterious killing at a gloomy mansion who is the killer. 16mm DVD item #M325D VHS item #M325

**GASLIGHT\*** (1940) Anton Walbrook, Diana Wynyard Robert Newton A husband tries to prove his wife was in an effort to find hidden family gems. The house efforts of a detective save him from his catches. Recommended. 16mm DVD item #M330D VHS item #M330

**UP IN THE AIR\*** (1940) Frankie Darro Marlon Moreland Marjorie Reynolds One of the earliest radio Monogram films you'll ever see. A murder is committed at a radio station. Frankie and Marlon set out to solve the crime. From 16mm DVD item #M324D VHS item #M324

**THE HIDDEN ROOM\*** (1940) Robert Newton Sally Gray Fine suspense thriller about a madman who keeps his rival locked in a cellar intent on murdering him. 16mm DVD item #M368D VHS item #M368

## SINISTER SIX-GUNS

NOTE: All Sinister Six-gun titles are just \$12.95 (unless otherwise noted), plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

**JUST TONY\*** (1922) Fox Tom Mix Tony, Clara Adams Tony's a cowboy seeking revenge on the man who shot him. During his travels he comes to admire a dazzling wild station named Tony, whom he wants to capture. Music score. 16mm DVD item #W330D VHS item #W330

**TOMBSTONE CANYON\*** (1932) Ken Maynard Sheldon Lewis Cecelia Parker A horror western. Ken hits town seeking a man who knows of his past. On the way in he hears the cry of the wild phantom of Tombstone Canyon. 35mm DVD item #W330D VHS item #W330

**MYSTERY RANCH\*** (1932) Reliable George O'Brien Charles Middleton Charlie is a maniacal ranch baron who lords over his region. O'Brien is sent to stop his evil schemes, dark and creepy. His horror fans will be impressed. 16mm DVD item #W248D VHS item #W248

**RED RIVER VALLEY\*** (1936) Gene Aubrey Smiley Burnette UNCUT Gene's after a dam project sabotaged. Many workers are being blown to smithereens. 16mm DVD item #W378D VHS item #W378

**WALL STREET COWBOY\*** (1939) Roy Rogers Gabby Hayes Roy's ranch is rich with precious ore, but a crooked banker plots to take the ranch away. 16mm DVD item #W423D VHS item #W423

**IDAHO\*** (1943) Roy Rogers Dana Munson UNCUT One of Rogers' very best. Roy's a deputy out to clear an ex-convict from a judge of a lame-up job. Munson is the sleazy, sexy owner of a local gambling joint who's behind it all. 35mm DVD item #W236D VHS item #W236

**LIGHTS OF OLD SANTA FE\*** (1944) Republic Roy Rogers Dana Evans UNCUT Roy is part of a rodeo troupe competing with another troupe headed by smooth-talking Keane, who burns them out and runs off their stock. 35mm DVD item #W233D VHS item #W233

**ROLL ON TEXAS MOON\*** (1946) Republic Roy Rogers Dana Evans Gabby Hayes UNCUT There's a bloody dispute between cattlemen and shepherds. It's up to Roy to prevent an all-out range war. Recommended. 35mm DVD item #W281D VHS item #W281





# the NEWS HOUND

It's a New Year of thrills and fear, so descend into The Hound's den for the latest news of upcoming projects in the entertainment sphere. So sphere it comes, Scarlet Ones

## Now Slaying

Ben Affleck stars as Marvel Comics' visually challenged superhero DAREDEVIL, due in theaters in February from 20th Century Fox. Written and directed by Mark Steven Johnson (SIMON BIRCH), the film costars Michael Clarke Duncan as Daredevil's arch-foe The Kingpin, and features Colin Farrell (MINORITY REPORT) as bad guy Bullseye and Jennifer Garner (TV's ALIAS) as bad gal Elektra. Watch for cameos from Marvel man Stan Lee and director Kevin Smith—the latter as a character named Jack Kirby!

The Australian supernatural romance TILL HUMAN VOICES WAKE US gets a Limited Stateside release in February from Paramount Classics. Guy Pearce (THE TIME MACHINE) stars as a big-city psychologist whose bittersweet return to his home town results in an encounter with an ethereal beauty from his past (Helena Bonham Carter). The film is written and directed by Michael Petroni, coscripter of last year's Anne Rice adaptat on QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

No, it's not a sequel to THE FLY—David Cronenberg's psychological thriller SPIDER (Sony Pictures Classics), adapted by Patrick McGrath from his 1990 novel, stars Ralph Fiennes as a severely disturbed man traumatized by childhood violence and obsessed by the mysteries of his past. Miranda Richardson, Gabriel Byrne, and Lynn Redgrave costar.

Tentatively scheduled for February is the Fox thriller PHONE BOOTH, directed by Joel Schumacher and scripted by prolific B-movie veteran Larry Cohen. Colin Farrell spends most of the film's running time in the titular kiosk, trapped on the phone by a madman who threatens to kill him with a sniper rifle if he hangs up. (Talk about your pushy telemarketers!) Also in the cast are Forest Whitaker, Katie Holmes, and Kiefer Sutherland

## Theatrical Thrills

Columbia's March release IDENTITY, a modern-horror update on old-school mystery thrillers, stars John Cusack, Alfred Molina, Amanda Peet, Clea DuVall, Rebecca DeMornay, and Ray Liotta as travelers stranded at a desolate motel by a storm. Guess what happens to them one by one (No, besides lousy room service.) James Mangold directs

Paramount's sci-fi actioner THE CORE is on the schedule for March after being delayed from last year. Aaron Eckhart,

Hillary Swank, and Bruce Greenwood are the intrepid team that must risk life, limb, and extreme perspiration by burrowing to the Earth's core to prevent global catastrophe. ENTRAPMENT director Jon Amiel helms the project, cowritten by John Rogers, author of the still-languishing Ashley Judd CATWOMAN feature.

Producer/director/rock star Rob Zombie's long-delayed horror film HOUSE OF 1,000 CORPSES is tentatively set for a March appearance. Lion's Gate Films acquired Mr. Zombie's grisly opus after Universal dropped it last year. (All that blood can be slippery.) This homage to



The late John Thaw took a break from playing Inspector Morse to menace Sherlock Holmes as Jonathan Small in THE SIGN OF FOUR (1987). Kiran Shah plays Tonga.

seventies slasher films is populated with some familiar faces from that decade, including Karen Black, Sid Haig, and Michael J. Pollard.

## Upcoming Attractions

On track for April release: DREAM CATCHER (Warner Bros.), based on Stephen King's 2001 thriller, stars Morgan Freeman, Tom Sizemore, and Donnie Wahlberg as former childhood friends who return to their home town to fight an otherworldly evil... John Malkovich stars as the murderous chameleon Tom Ripley in Fine Line's adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's 1974 novel Ripley's Game... Richard Donner directs TIME-LINE (Paramount), a sci-fi thriller based on Michael Crichton's 1998 time travel tale... The flesh-eating Creeper (no, not

Rondo Hatton, alas) returns in United Artists' horror sequel LIKE HELL: JEEPERS CREEPERS 2.

Universal and Columbia are joining forces for a live-action version of PETER PAN, an Australian production from director P.J. Hogan (MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING). Thirteen-year-old Jeremy Sumpter (FRAILTY) stars as the title sprite, with Jason Isaacs (THE PATRIOT) as the piratical Captain Hook. Lynne Redgrave is also in the cast, and Uma Thurman is rumored to portray Wendy Darling as an adult in framing sequences. The J. M. Barrie adaptation is due out in theaters next December.

## Future Features

Yo-ho, yo-ho! Disney is turning its popular theme park ride PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN into a movie starring Johnny Depp, Geoffrey Rush, and Orlando Bloom (LORD OF THE RINGS). Director Gore Verbinsky (THE RING) and writers Terry Rossio and Ted Elliott (SHREK) are wrapping production on a feature film based on the long running audio-animated attraction (It debuted at Disneyland in 1967.) We'll see if the film version incorporates Disney's recent prim and proper cleanup of the attraction, with Depp and Rush lustily chasing after food instead of wenches. The Walt Disney/Jerry Bruckheimer production debuts in theaters this summer.

Halle Berry has agreed to reprise her role as NSA agent Jinx from the latest James Bond film DIE ANOTHER DAY. Additionally, Bond series producer Barbara Broccoli has confirmed that MGM is considering a spin-off film, or even a franchise, with Berry soloing as Jinx. Pierce (007) Brosnan, meanwhile, has agreed to one more Bond flick, which may be his last. But wait—as Mr. Connery learned, never say never again.

New Line Cinema has purchased author David Gerrold's multiple award-winning 2002 novelette *The Martian Child* for development as a feature film. The semiautobiographical story involves a single sci-fi writer who adopts a six-year-old boy, and then begins to suspect that his son is a Martian. Gerrold is perhaps best known as the author of STAR TREK's most popular episode, "The Trouble With Tribbles," as well as the most famous unproduced STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION script, the gay-themed "Blood and Fire."

## Déjà Views

Movie sequels currently in the works include CHARLIE'S ANGELS 2: FULL

Continued on page 23





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# Reviving the Frankenstein Monster

by David J. Skal

**J**ohn L. Balderston's 1930 stage adaptation of **FRANKENSTEIN** never made it to Broadway. Eager for a quick followup to its hit film **DRACULA** (1931), Universal preempted the planned stage production by snapping up the screen rights. The rest, of course, was cinematic history.

But Balderston's reworking of British playwright Peggy Webling's **FRANKENSTEIN: AN ADVENTURE IN THE MACABRE** was a very different creature than the James Whale/Boris Karloff classic film of 1931. Some years ago, I suggested in print that it was well worth reviving by some enterprising theater company. Not long afterward, I heard from Eric Stedman, a playwright/producer/director based in Bucks County, PA, asking me where to start. I told him what I knew about the performance rights, and Stedman spent nearly five years breathing life into the lost monster, obtaining permission from the Balderston estate, securing a performance venue, and stitching together an enthusiastic volunteer cast.

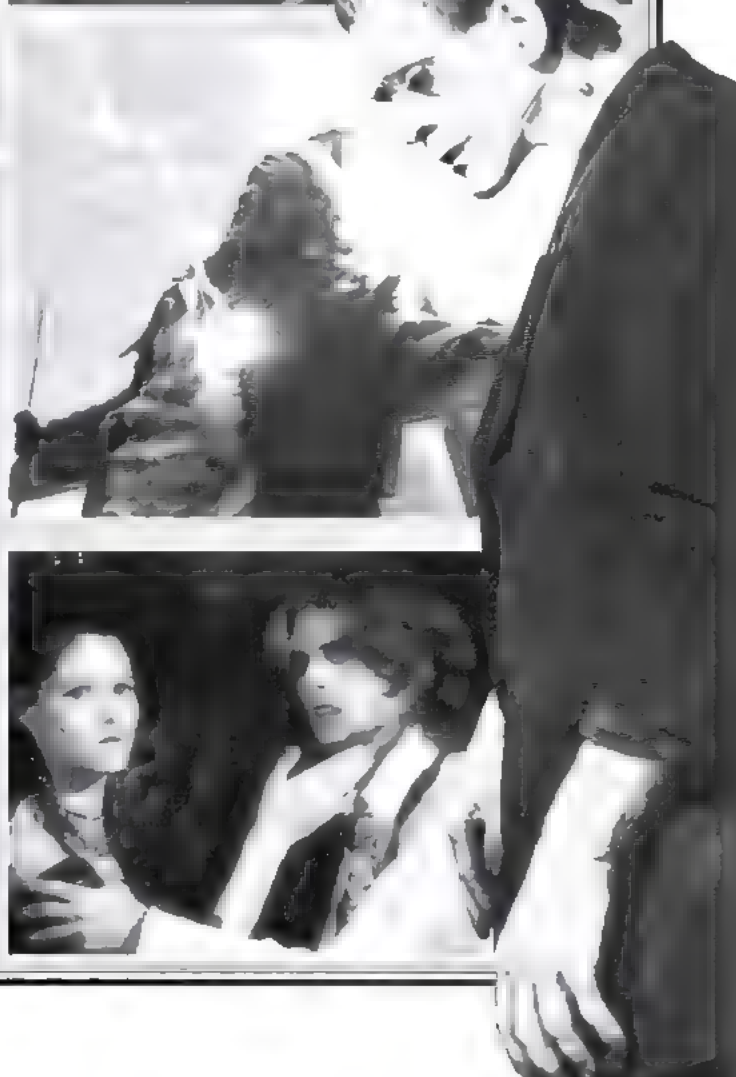
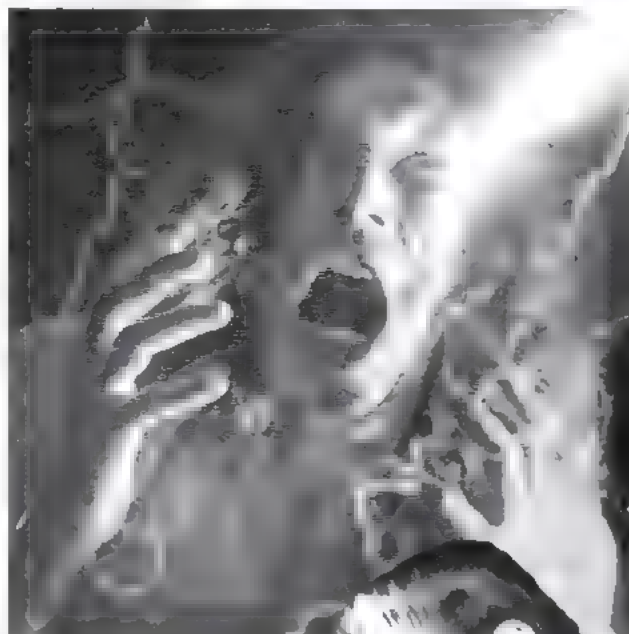
This past Halloween weekend, Balderston's script received its world stage premiere in Newtown, PA, and a serendipitous east-coast book tour made it possible for me to attend (and introduce) the penultimate performance. Stedman's adaptation made a few judicious textual alterations; the names of the principal characters, originally altered by Webling and adopted by Balderston (Henry, instead of Victor Frankenstein; Amelia, instead of Elizabeth, etc.) were restored to the names first bestowed by Mary Shelley—who herself made a curtain-raising appearance, reciting her 1831 account of the creation scene's genesis.

The script in performance amounted to a fascinating, alternate-universe version of the Universal film, with several sequences clearly echoed, but the production also made apparent just how uncomfortable Universal executives were with Balderston's emphasis on religion. Their eventual decision to suppress a "blasphemous" line of dialogue in the film ("Oh, in the name of God—now I know what it feels like to be God!") pales against the pages of theological quarreling between Frankenstein and his mentor Dr. Waldman (here a priest as well as a scientist) never used in the film at all.

The creature was played with a truly riveting presence by Brian Albert, whose sudden shifts between pathos and rage were genuinely unsettling, a performance that deserves to be reprised in a full scale production. Victor Frankenstein was played by Blaise Guld, a 19-year-old singer/composer who frequently conjured the persona of a young Johnny Depp, and underscored something important always overlooked by filmmakers: Frankenstein was a university student, as imagined by a teenaged writer. Elizabeth was Leann Wintermute.

For a production mounted on a miniscule budget, the stage effects were frequently impressive, ranging from creation paraphernalia inspired by the 1910 Edison version's magician's cabinet, the Hammer mad labs of the fifties and sixties, and even **RE-ANIMATOR** (1985). The creature's demise in an electrical crucifixion was Stedman's original contribution, but perfectly in keeping with the script.

Since Frankenstein monsters, once loosed, are notoriously difficult to suppress, let's hope this one will be making another appearance soon.





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#### NEWS HOUND

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THROTTLE (Columbia), coming this summer; FURY ROAD: MAD MAX 4 (Fox), going into production in May with star Mel Gibson and writer/director George Miller returning to their posts; JURASSIC PARK 4 (Universal), due in 2004 or 2005 with star Sam Neill likely to return; GLADIATOR 2 (DreamWorks), a prequel written by the original film's co-scripter John Logan, CONAN 3 (Warner Bros.) from writer/director John Milius and MATRIX producers Larry and Andy Wachowski; THE RING 2 (DreamWorks) from Gore Verbinski, director of the 2002 original; SPOOKY-DOO TOO (Warner Bros.); and SCARY MOVIE 3, EPISODE 1: LORD OF THE BROOMS (Dimension) from AIRPLANE! director David Zucker.

DARK SHADOWS, TV's Gothic guilty pleasure of sixties weekday afternoons, is again being developed as a feature film by series creator Dan Curtis, who directed two SHADOWS features in the early seventies starring the original TV cast. Curtis hopes to lure Johnny Depp into the role of lead vampire Barnabas Collins (Barnabas was played by Jonathan Frid in the original soap opera, and by Ben Cross in the 1991 NBC series.) More on this toothsome project as it unearths.

#### Updates Aplenty

As reported last time, Hugh Jackman is starring as VAN HELSING, author Bram

Stoker's famed foe of supernatural evil, in MUMMY maven Stephen Sommers' new horror adventure. Van Helsing's undead nemesis Count Dracula is played by Australian actor Richard Roxburgh, who appeared as Sherlock Holmes in this winter's BBC televersion of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (and will be seen this summer as a villain in THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN). Joining in the mayhem are Frankenstein's Monster (portrayed by Shuler Hensley, Tony winner for Broadway's current revival of OKLAHOMA!), and The Wolf Man (played by British dancer-turned-actor Will Kemp). On the side of goodness and light are Kevin J. O'Connor (the weaselly Beni of the MUMMY features) as Van Helsing's assistant Igor, David Wenham (Faramir of THE LORD OF THE RINGS) as guardian and benefactor Friar Carl, and Kate Beckinsale (HAUNTED) as Anna, daughter of a family sworn to destroy Dracula. (She's also the less hirsute sister of the lupine Mr. Kemp.) VAN HELSING is now in production for a summer 2004 Universal release.

SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL is the working title of the new entry in Warner Bros.'s super-franchise. Brett Ratner (RUSH HOUR) has been assigned to direct from a script by J. J. Abrams. So far, Anthony Hopkins is the only confirmed cast member (he'll play Superman's father, Jor-El), but the latest rumors have Charlie Sheen being considered for Lex

Luthor, and the title role likely going to a relative unknown.

Paul Schrader (CAT PEOPLE) has taken over directing duties on the demonic prequel EXORCIST: DOMINION (aka EXORCIST: THE BEGINNING) following the death of veteran helmer John Frankenheimer. Production began appropriately on October 31 of last year, with Stellan Skarsgard as the demon-battling Father Lancaster Merrin. A July release is planned by Warner Bros.

#### Small Screen News

The WB network has clipped the wings of its neat new DC Comics series BIRDS OF PREY. Only nine episodes of the stylish distaff Batman spinoff have aired at press time; it remains to be seen if producers Tollin/Robbins (SMALLVILLE) decide to produce a full 13-episode season.

The USA Network's successful Stephen King series THE DEAD ZONE began its second season in January. Anthony Michael Hall returns as Johnny Smith in 13 new episodes, again to be telecast both on USA and Sci-Fi Channel for your viewing convenience... The TNT cable channel has a new production of SHE—from H. Rider Haggard's classic 1886 adventure novel—on their production slate for a 2004 premiere. Prolific genre TV-movie specialists Hallmark Entertainment and producer Robert Halmi Sr. will head the

Continued on page 25



## The International Classic Monster Movie Conference

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## NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 23

three-hour production... Britain's ITV1 is set to produce a new miniseries of DRACULA starring Martin Kemp (EMBRACE OF THE VAMPIRE). The channel promises that the production will be the most accurate television production ever of the Stoker classic. And if you believe that Scarlet Streeters, The Hound wants to interest you in some prime swamp-land in Dartmoor...

### The Home Video Vault

A plethora of new Holmesian home videos are soon hitting the shelves. The new BBC production of THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES starring Richard Roxburgh as The Great Detective is available on DVD and VHS from Warner Home Video (\$19.98). Also starring in this production are Ian Hart (Professor Quirrell of HARRY POTTER) as Dr. Watson and Richard E. Grant (Mycroft Holmes in USA Network's CASE OF EVIL) as Stapleton. Also new on DVD is director Bob Clark's 1979 Sherlockian gem MURDER BY DECREE (Anchor Bay, \$19.98), starring Christopher Plummer and James Mason. And MPI has released the Jeremy Brett/Edward Hardwicke television features THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, THE SIGN OF FOUR, THE FLIGIBLE BACHELOR, and THE LAST VAMPYRE (all with liner notes by Scarlet Street's own Richard Valley) to DVD for \$14.98 each. And rumor has it that restored versions of the classic Basil Rathbone/Nigel Bruce theatrical Holmes series are soon to be seen on DVD... stay tuned for more clues.

Completist Trekkers will gravitate toward the STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE Season One DVD boxed set, available from Paramount for \$139.99. Other new DVD titles of interest include MILDRED PIERCE (Warner, \$19.98), ANGEL Season One (Fox, \$59.98) and the 2002 Hallmark telefilm HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN MY LIFE AS A FAIRYTALE (Artisan, \$19.98). And Acorn Media has released the second set of six INSPECTOR MORSE mysteries to DVD at \$14.98 each. ARMISTEAD MAUPIN'S TALES OF THE CITY is available now on DVD from Acorn Media in a two-disc special edition that includes behind-the-scenes and rehearsal footage, and an audio commentary by author Maupin, director Alastair Reid, and actors Olympia Dukakis, Laura Linney, and Barbara Garrick.

Coming to DVD in March from Fox: special editions of THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL and JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (\$19.98 each). Special features on the former include a production documentary and an audio commentary by directors Robert Wise and Nicholas Meyer.

Season One of the hit WB TV series SMALLVILLE is due on DVD in two installments—the first set is available from Warner Home Video in May, the second in August.

Due on DVD from Warners in July are special editions of GIANT, THE DEER HUNTER, and THE RIGHT STUFF. The double-barreled Charlton Heston releases SOYLENT GREEN and THE OMEGA MAN are due in September... Other tentative 2003 DVD releases include Steven Spielberg's Sci Fi Channel miniseries

TAKEN (DreamWorks); possible Fox offerings LAURA and ONE MILLION YEARS B.C., and rumored TV series boxed sets of DARK ANGEL, MILLENNIUM, LOST IN SPACE, and THE TIME TUNNEL.

Home video release dates are changeable, so consult your local video emporium for the latest info.

\*\*\*

Gone, but never to be forgotten: performer/lyricist/librettist/screenwriter Adolph Green; songwriters George Barrie, Buddy Kaye, and Noel Regney; composers Wesley Naylor and Ron Goodwin; bandleader Ray Conniff; jazz pianist Roland Hanna; animator William Erwin Henson; artist/poet Stan Rice (husband of Anne); writers Raymond T. McNally and Doug McClelland; screenwriter Bert Granet; cinematographer Conrad Hall; producers Roone Arledge, Marvin Mirisch, and Sid Pink; directors André De Toth, Nathan Juran, John Meredyth Lucas, and Bruce Paltrow; and actors Billie Bird, Eddie Bracken, Phyllis Calvert, Katrin Cartlidge, Keene Curtis, Brad Dexter, Teresa Graves, Michael Elphick, Cliff Gorman, Richard Harris, Marianne Hoppe, Adele Jergens, John Justin, Jonathan Harris, Royce Applegate, Buddy Lester, Maurice Manson, Peggy Moran, LaWanda Page, Dennis Patrick, Scott Plank, Glenn Quinn, Cheryl "Rainbeaux" Smith, Jay R. Smith (Our Gang's "Specks"), Lolita Torres, and Raf Vallone.

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via email to [TheNewsHound@scarletstreet.com](mailto:TheNewsHound@scarletstreet.com)



# SCREEN...

## and Screen AGAIN!

### Scarlet Street's DVD Reviews

**THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN**  
Warner Home Video  
\$19.99

It's gratifying to see Warner Bros. finally free some of the prized Hammer films that have been languishing in its vaults. Unfortunately, most of the DVDs released by Warners so far (including 1958's *HORROR OF DRACULA* and 1959's *THE MUMMY*) reflect the studio's disinterest in these titles, which kept them on the shelf for so long in the first place.

Certainly, Warners could have done better by *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957) in terms of bonus materials. The extras are limited to the original theatrical trailers, a cast list, and a skimpy, text-only production history. Films as historically significant as these deserve better treatment. Also, the packaging is sloppy—*CURSE* sports a photo of Peter Cushing and Yvonne Furneaux from *THE MUMMY*!

Fans have carped about the matting of Warners' letterboxed transfer. However,

the controversy seems to be much ado about nothing. The film is matted to 1.85:1 in an anamorphic widescreen format, the same aspect ratio in which it was originally released. A minimal amount of vertical information appears to have been lost from previous full-screen VHS editions, but that's more than counterbalanced by the additional information visible on the left and right in the letterbox format, and by the restoration of Fisher's intended compositions. The transfer is letter-perfect and the source print is excellent—razor sharp focus, virtually fleck and speckle-free, with firm blacks and rich reds and greens. Cinematographer Jack Asher shot *CURSE* in a muted palette, mostly in beige, browns, and other neutral hues. The colors don't jump off the screen. Still, this is quite a handsome disc, though not as impressive as Columbia's DVD release of *CURSE*'s sequel, *THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1958).

As a film, *CURSE* isn't entirely satisfying. Most of the film's liabilities lie with

its script—the pacing is lumpy and some of the supporting characters are poorly drawn. Still, this picture radiates an irresistible energy—the cast and crew were doing something no one had tried before (a Gothic horror film in color, with flashes of graphic gore) and they knew it. Their enthusiasm is palpable and contagious. The key performances, by Peter Cushing as Baron Victor Frankenstein and Christopher Lee as his Creature, are both splendid. Cushing was born to play the obsessive, indomitable Frankenstein. And although he won't make anybody forget about Boris Karloff, Lee contributes one of his most interesting performances as The Creature. He takes a vastly different approach than Karloff and comes up with a refreshing, fascinating portrayal. Karloff presented the Monster as an uncoordinated child, Lee moves more like a machine with a few of its wires crossed.

Despite its occasional flaws, *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* remains an essential building block in any collection of classic horror films. It deserves a Special Edition treatment, but this disc will do for the present.

—Mark Clark

**THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN**  
Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment  
\$19.95

With *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1957), Hammer Films reinvigorated the horror genre, which had lain dormant for over a decade. Yet the immediate sequel, *THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, is even more satisfactory, a visually elaborate production displaying greater assurance on the part of the production team. Director Terence Fisher and art director Bernard Robinson prove facile in expanding on their initial attempts, but it's writer Jimmy Sangster's work that makes the sequel a more expansive affair, with more thoughtful exploration of themes and a more loosely structured, less formulaic script.

*REVENGE* finds Baron Frankenstein (Peter Cushing), having escaped the guillotine in a manner most befitting a man who presumes to play God, set up in a successful medical practice, and running a charity hospital on the side. Hans Kleve (Francis Matthews) recognizes him and signs on as an assistant on the Baron's latest experiment—to give a perfect body to the deformed Karl (Oscar Quitak), who helped Frankenstein avoid decapitation. While the operation is a success, Karl (now Michael Gwynne) is mistaken for an intruder by Frankenstein's janitor (George Woodbridge) and beaten so savagely that he suffers brain damage and becomes homicidal. Exit one janitor.

Much has been made of the transformation of the Baron's character from ruthlessness to a more ambiguous morality, but in truth he seems little changed. He may run a charity hospital, but since he also regards it as a warehouse of body parts for his experiments, his altruism is questionable. While he fulfills his promise to Karl—in contrast to such ingrates





as Dr. Neumann in *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1944)—he also plans to take him and his former body on a lecture tour. For all his pontificating about benefiting mankind, he's still after personal glory. Any softening of characterization lies more in Cushing's less intense playing, which emphasizes the Baron's urbanity, and Fisher's witty direction.

REVENGE's chief innovation lies in being the first *Frankenstein* film lacking a monster in the traditional sense. Karl is merely a human being—albeit an artificial one—so misused that he becomes deformed and insane. In many ways this creature is closer than any previous *Frankenstein* Monster to Mary Shelley's original concept of an intelligent but abhorrent being. Pity no one realized that Karl could degenerate without resorting to cannibalism, an uncommonly smart film's only lapse into cliché.

The production shows why Hammer was initially so successful. It's wonderfully cast, with Cushing and Matthews leading a notable stable of character actors, including Michael Ripper, Lionel Jeffries, and Charles Lloyd Pack. George Woodbridge chillingly goes against type as the sadistic janitor. The production



beyond handsome due to some of Robinson's most inventive sets and Jack Asher's Expressionistic use of color gels.

Aside from Anchor Bay's releases, this is the best-looking transfer among the recent Hammer DVDs, boasting rich and accurate color, with only infrequent shifts toward red. The original theatrical trailer, with specially shot footage of Cushing that also looks terrific, is among the sparse extras.

—Harry H. Long

#### DONOVAN'S REEF Paramount Home Video \$19.99

Made during the tail end of John Ford's long, lustrous career, *DONOVAN'S REEF* (1963) is a perfect "aging masculine id wish fulfillment picture," sort of a cinema tough guy retirement home, a "happily ever after." It all goes down on the tropical island of Haleakalā, which is populated by giggling Asian stereotype merchants, plenty of nubile stereotype island maidens, and happy servants. Even an aging but still lovely Dorothy Lamour is present, replete with sarong. Ruining all they survey are a lusty ambassador (Cesar Romero), drunken sailor Cuthooley (Lee Marvin), saloon owner Donovan (John

Wayne), and Jack Warden as a kindly naval doctor who stayed after the war to be the island's physician, and to father several (adorable) half-caste children. The doctor is heir to a fortune back in Boston, where he abandoned his family, so his uptight but foxy daughter, Amelia (Elizabeth Allen), travels to the island to trick him out of his inheritance. The clever white men figure out how to outwit her, which basically involves Donovan pretending the kids are his so as not to impugn the doc's moral character. Instead of remaining a snobby racist, of course, Amelia soon succumbs to the island's spell and falls for Donovan, who spansks her to make sure she's "cured." In addition, there's lots of ceremonial dancing, drinking, smoking, and brawling.

One gets the sense that making *THE QUIET MAN* (1952) struck a pleasant chord in Ford, as many of his subsequent films, such as this one, strive for the same sort of gently ribald, magical realism tone. Wayne's character is again living a fine old expat lifestyle in an exotic foreign land, tangling with a strong-willed lass, and winning her over after engaging in knockdown brawls that go on endlessly with no one ever getting seriously hurt. 'Tis fine fantasy, and everyone in the cast seems to enjoying themselves. It's also the perfect note to go out on for a great team, as this was to be the last film Wayne and Ford made together.

Presented in a nice 1:78 aspect ratio, the colors are so rich and clear that you can practically smell the sea air and flowers. Sound is nice and crisp in a robust Dolby Digital 2.0 mono. (There's also an optional French track.) You can almost hear the ocean in the background of every scene. A trailer is the only extra. If one isn't put off by the lack of cohesive plot, political correctness, or driven narrative, *DONOVAN'S REEF* is a great place to drop by.

—Ench Kuersten

#### THE CLIFF RICHARD COLLECTION Anchor Bay Entertainment \$39.98

Somewhere between Elvis Presley and The Beatles, Cliff Richard carved himself a nice pop singing career in the British Isles. Like his musical antecedents, Richard took his considerable talents (singer, songwriter, babe machine) to the silver screen. Though merely a footnote on the American music scene—his duet with Olivia Newton-John, "Suddenly," (from 1980's *XANADU*), and his hosting duties on TV's *SOLID GOLD* are his chief recognizable credits—Richard's home-front career burnt brightly. Anchor Bay has mercifully reclaimed Richard's films from obscurity and released them on DVD in an inexpensively priced, three-disc package under the umbrella title *THE CLIFF RICHARD COLLECTION*.



This triple feature is a triple pleasure. Not only do we get to witness exactly what made Cliff Richard so popular in Britain, but we also view the career beginnings for a couple of noteworthy directors, starlets, and choreographers.

From its *WEST SIDE STORY*-esque opening sequence, choreographed with high energy by Herbert Ross, 1961's *THE YOUNG ONES* wins its way into the heart with a charming youth versus maturity script that has a few unpredictable twists. Cliff portrays Nicky Black, the son of building magnate Hamilton Black (Robert Morley), whose nefarious plans include bulldozing the local youth club. The youthful club members, who include Carole Gray (one of the brides of 1966's *THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU*) and Richard's backup band, The Shadows, pull a Mickey-and-Judy to save their night spot. Director Sidney J. Furie makes the slight plot believable. London's *Serpentine* makes a lovely backdrop for the title tune, a lilting melody penned by longtime Richard collaborators Roy Bennett and Sid Tepper, who also contribute the film's major ballad, "The Girl in Your Arms." Both songs reached the top spot on the British pop charts.

Even slighter plotwise, 1963's *SUMMER HOLIDAY* is helped by its stunning European location work, as mechanic Don (Richard) buses over the continent with his mates. Chaos ensues when they pick up a couple of birds and a stowaway child (the captivating Laurie Peters). *SUMMER HOLIDAY* marked the feature-film directing debut of Peter Yates, who would find better scripts for his talents with *BULLITT* (1968) and *BREAKING AWAY* (1979). Yates' gift for working with cinematic novices is evident even this early in the game, and he gets very reliable performances from his too cute to be true thespians.

The best of the three—if only for its nearly 20-minute musical sequence tracing "The History of the Movies"—is the least-known 1964's *WONDERFUL LIFE*. The film dazzles with a dozen delirious ditties, and Walter Slezak delights as a ruthless film director ("I can't film an orgy with 200 slave girls—that's a vicarage tea party. Send me 200 more slave girls!") making a sand and sandal saga in the tropical Canary Islands. Enter a shipwrecked group of guys fronted by Cliff Richard, a leading lady who is not everything one would expect, and the cool,

swinging choreography of Gillian Lynne and you've got a surefire hit. **WONDERFUL LIFE** mocks the conventions of filmmaking much in the way that Comden and Green's **SINGIN' IN THE RAIN** (1952) did, while giving Susan Hampshire equal opportunity to strut her song and dance skills right beside Richard.

Cliff Richard's easygoing style—he's very relaxed on camera—speaks more of the crooners of the thirties and forties than of the British Invasion. Richard croons his way through several memorable ballads in each of the three films, but when he rocks, he's a less-masculine



Elvis Presley, but a more macho Donny Osmond (whom he fleetingly resembles). Each disc features the restored widescreen transfers in glorious Technicolor hues reminiscent of Jacques Demy's **UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG** (1964) and **THE YOUNG GIRLS OF ROCHEFORT** (1967), the films' trailers, a detailed Cliff Richard biographical sketch, and director commentaries for all three features. The films themselves are not as bantamweight as the majority of Presley's oeuvre, and less frenetic than Richard Lester's Beatles flicks, but lie somewhere between, closer in spirit to the great MGM Musicals.

—Anthony Dale

**GREMLINS**  
**GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH**  
 Warner Home Video  
 \$19.98 each

**GREMLINS** (1984) is **IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE** (1946) peopled by psychotic muppets. It's a warmhearted family comedy with startling moments of violence and s.c.k humor.

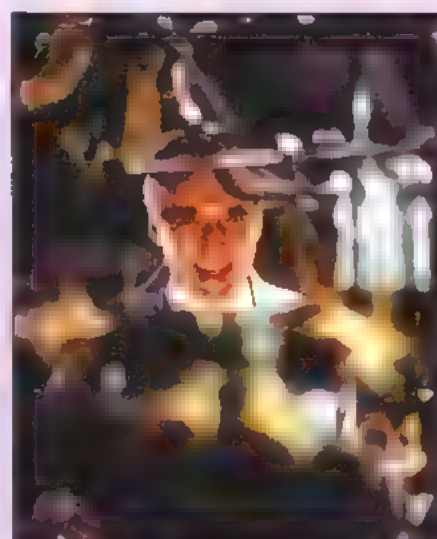
Welcome to Kingston Falls, presided over by the richest and meanest woman in town, Mrs. Deagle (Polly Holliday). Meet the Peltzer family—dad Rand (Hoyt Axton), always on the road in the hope of selling his crackpot inventions (at one convention, a rival genius demonstrates his time machine—specifically, the time machine from the 1960 film of the same

name); mom Lynn (Frances Lee McCain), who's a whiz in the kitchen; and boyish, bank-teller son Billy (Zach Galligan), who's in love with the lovely Kate Beringer (Phoebe Cates).

Seeking a Christmas gift for his son, Rand wanders into a Chinatown shop whose owner (Keye Luke) includes Mogwai (furry little critters) among his inventory. Soon enough, there's a Mogwai in Kingston Falls, then (due to an accident) there's a bunch of Mogwai, and then (due to another accident) they've all turned quite nasty, with the sole exception being Gizmo (voiced by Howie Mandel), the very first in the bunch. Chaos reigns in Kingston Falls! Mrs. Deagle takes a super speedy one-way ride on her staircase chair, the Fattermans (Dick Miller and Jackie Joseph) barely survive a Mogwai attack (Fatterman, a WWII vet, refers to the creatures as gremlins), and it's left to Zach, Kate, and Gizmo to save the day.

An ungarnished **GREMLINS** was previously released in 1997, but this new edition features audio commentaries with director Joe Dante, producer Michael Finnell, special effects artist Chris Walas, and cast members Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates, Dick Miller, and Howie Mandel, deleted scenes; a featurette; a photo and storyboard gallery; and trailers.

Due to efforts to tone down the violence before release (the Fattermans, for instance, were allowed to live), **GREMLINS** is a fun but schizophrenic affair. The 1990 sequel, **GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH**, is more satire than spoof, set in a Manhattan skyscraper run by the Clamp Corporation and media mogul Daniel Clamp (John Glover). Billy and Kate (Galligan and Cates reprising their roles) are employees, Gizmo falls into the hands of Clamp's resident mad doctor (Christopher Lee), accidents occur, and a new bunch of wicked little beasties overrun the building, creating havoc with



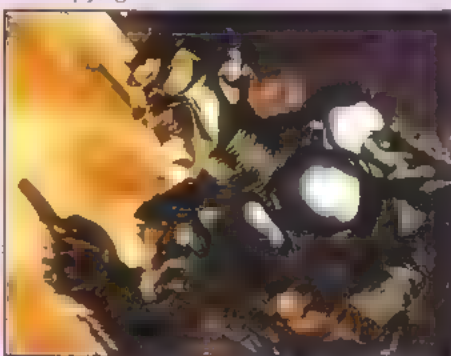
Clamp's television programming, including a horror program hosted by Grandpa Fred (Robert Prosky) and a cooking show with Microwave Marge (the late, great Kathleen Freeman).

DVD supplements include commentaries by Dante, Finnell, Galligan, and writer Charlie Haas; deleted scenes; a gag reel; a featurette, and a theatrical trailer. There's also an entertaining Easter egg to be found by those willing to search for it.

—Drew Sullivan

**SPIDER-MAN**  
 Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment  
 \$28.96

This isn't the first time that EVIL DEAD auteur Sam Raimi has had a go at the superhero market, but this is a lot nearer taking the brass-ring than was his earlier **DARKMAN** (1990). **SPIDER-MAN** (2001) is no instant classic, but as blockbuster entertainment, you're not apt to find much better. It's a solid, sometimes campy, good-natured fun film with its




heart and brains in the right places, and it achieves a degree of emotional weight by affording the main characters at least the illusion of reality—not that any of them are exactly all that deep.

It helps that Raimi is blessed with Tobey Maguire as Peter Parker/Spider-Man. Maguire, who already distinguished himself in such films as Lasse Halstrom's **THE CIDER HOUSE RULES** (1999), is an inspired choice—perhaps the best choice ever for a super hero. That's important, because David Koepp's screenplay isn't always helpful in terms of character development. There are too many instances—especially, Peter's reaction to being transformed into a web-spinning superhero thanks to the bite of a genetically engineered spider—where the character as written takes things just too much in his stride. (I don't know about anyone else, but I'd be just a tad concerned if I found myself shooting spider webs out of my wrists.) Maguire is so good that you're willing to overlook these lapses.

Kirsten Dunst is very nearly as good as Mary Jane Watson. The rest of the cast is similarly fine, though not always in the same key. Willem Dafoe makes a splendidly complex villain in his more human incarnation as Norman Osborn, while pulling out all the stops once he takes on his Green Goblin persona. The latter characterization is fun, but somewhat out of synch with the more sober playing in the rest of the film. Perhaps this was Dafoe's attempt to overcome playing the part behind an immobile mask that looks like a combination of the robot from the Bela Lugosi serial **THE PHANTOM**





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CREEPS (1939), the headpiece worn by George Zucco in TARZAN AND THE MERMAIDS (1948), and the grille from a 1937 Cord. J. K. Simmons is a sheer delight as newspaper publisher J. Jonah Jameson, and one of the disappointments of the film is that this preposterous character vanishes somewhere around the halfway point.

The occasional problems to one side, SPIDER-MAN is first-rate entertainment and looks splendid on the special two-disc DVD set. Among literally dozens of extras—commentaries by Raimi, Dunst, Laura Ziskin (producer), Grant Curtis (co-producer), John Dykstra (special effects); trailers and TV spots; music videos; a comic / feature film comparison; the documentaries SPIDER-MAN: THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE 21ST CENTURY and THE MAKING OF SPIDER-MAN; the E! Entertainment special SPIDER-MANIA, and much, much, much more!

—Ken Hanke

#### SCARLET STREET

Alpha Video  
\$7.98

Often dismissed as a mere sidebar to Fritz Lang's 1944 film THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW, primarily due to the use of the same cast (Edward G. Robinson, Dan Duryea, and Joan Bennett) in back-to-back film noir roles, SCARLET STREET (1945) is an interesting remake—a remake of Jean Renoir's LE CHIENNE (1931), that is. Based on the novel and play by Georges de la Fouchardière (in collaboration with Mouezy-Eon), screenwriter Dudley Nichols and director/pro-

ducer Lang altered the story to make it uniquely their own.

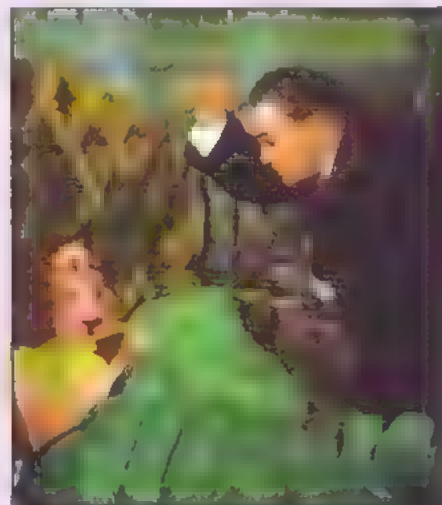
Robinson inhabits the role of Chris Cross, a would-be painter whose life becomes entangled with that of prostitute Kitty March (Bennett) and her boyfriend/pimp, Johnny (Duryea). Chris lives a dreary and loveless existence as a bank cashier, logging his 25th year with his firm. His unsympathetic wife (Rosalind Ivan) divides her time between ridiculing his paintings and reminding him of how good her life was with her deceased first husband. Kitty is a welcome change in Chris' life. He believes Kitty is a model, while she and Johnny mistakenly believe he's a wealthy artist. Kitty convinces him to set her up in an apartment where he can visit and work on his paintings. She continues seeing Johnny, who urges her to manipulate Chris for more money. As Chris' paintings improve, Johnny starts selling them under Kitty's name. The climax of the film centers around Chris learning of Kitty and Johnny's deception and the actions he takes thereafter. One life is taken by murder, one by the law, and the other by the guilty conscience of one's mind.

A clever story detailed in nuance and innuendo, SCARLET STREET is similar to THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW in its emphasis on art and film noir themes, but Lang distinguishes this film from the previous in a number of ways that demand multiple viewings in order to catch the subtle shadows within the shadows. Each character gets a taste of the life they so deeply desire, but with considerable consequences. Deception, desire, and love as

muse each weave their way through life and art on SCARLET STREET.

Alpha Video first released SCARLET STREET on VHS in 1997, but the print was plagued with numerous scratches, distracting audio noise, and small segments of missing film. Thankfully, this new DVD release is a welcome improvement. The audio problems and most of the film scratches and blemishes are gone. Most important, none of the footage is missing; the film clocks in at 102 minutes.

—Michael D. Walker



**STRANGE INVADERS**  
MGM Home Entertainment  
\$14.95

Centerville, Illinois 1958. It's a perfectly idyllic town—until the aliens arrive and

start zapping everyone. Flash forward 25 years: Columbia University Professor of entomology Charles Bigelow (Paul Le Mat) is taking care of daughter Elizabeth (Lulu Silbert) while ex-wife Margaret (Diana Scarwid) is in Centerville due to the death of her mother (At least that's what Margaret has told him.) After not being able to reach her for days, Charles leaves Elizabeth with his mother (June Lockhart) and heads to Centerville. There he finds the town stuck in a fifties time-war, and his questions rile up the townspeople. Their response is to zap his dog and car.

Returning to New York, Charles is followed by an exodus of townies searching for him. Charles discovers that Center-



ville has been abandoned since the fifties and enlists the aid of tabloid reporter Betty Walker (Nancy Allen)—who ran a picture of one of the aliens, never imagining that it was genuine. Margaret returns and reveals that the aliens are really after Elizabeth, but is too late to save her. With government agent Benjamin (Louise Fletcher) hot on their heels, Charles and Betty rush to Centerville...

Writer/director Michael Laughlin and cowriter Bill Condon are clearly genre fans and have invested *STRANGE INVADERS* (1983) with an engaging story that's tongue-in-cheek without being condescending to the material. The pace drags a bit in a few scattered scenes, but never long enough to derail enjoyment. The film is absolutely brimming with great character actors, including such genre faves as June Lockhart, Kenneth Tobey, and Fiona Lewis, and it's a joy to watch them in action. John Addison's score is very much in the spirit of the fifties sci-fi films it gently parodies and complements the action beautifully. The makeup and effects are very effective, especially considering the low budget.

*STRANGE INVADERS* demands to be seen in its full aspect ratio as presented on MGM's DVD. There are a few scratchy frames, but otherwise it's a defect-free and colorful print. The image is not very sharp, but that's due to the director's use of filters and is not a fault of the transfer. The main extra is a commentary by Laughlin and Condon. The track is well worth listening to, presenting many interesting stories (including a couple illustrating what a curmudgeon Pauline Kael could be) and a good rundown of the making of the film.

Ron Morgan

#### THE BRIDE AND THE BEAST Retromedia Entertainment \$19.95

When he wasn't writing and directing his own poverty row exploitation efforts, Edward D. Wood Jr.'s screenwriting services were occasionally utilized by other budget-conscious filmmakers. Wood penned (or perhaps, typed) *THE BRIDE AND THE BEAST* (1958) for producer/director Adrian Weiss, a product that could have been ballyhooed as "Two, two, two films in one."

The first half hour plays like a Woodian adaptation of the then popular Bridey Murphy case ("Average housewife" Virginia Tighe had described her supposed past life as an Irish washerwoman named Bridey Murphy while undergoing hypnosis.) Dan Fuller (Lance Fuller), a self-described great white hunter whose house is modestly named "Dan Fuller's Jungle," returns home with his newlywed bride, Laura (Charlotte Austin). He's ready to do the wild thing, but she becomes more intrigued with Spanky (Steve Calvert), a fully-grown gorilla caged in the basement. Spanky escapes and puts some moves on Laura before Fuller shoots him to death. The animal's untimely demise awakens Laura's subconscious affinity for gorillas. Psychologist Dr. Carl Reiner (William Justine) employs hypnosis to regress Laura to her previous existence—as a simian queen!

To this point, *THE BRIDE AND THE BEAST* is an entertaining addition to the Wood canon, with its fanciful first-person images of Laura's bestial past coupled with her fetishistic appreciation for angora. Wood's use of the name "Spanky" slyly hints at the softcore direction his career would soon take, beginning with *THE SINISTER URGE* (1960). Unfortunately, most of the remaining 48 minutes depict a mind-numbingly dull cinematic safari through treacherous stock-footage-infested African locales (cribbed from the 1948 Sabu drama *MAN-EATER OF KU*



MAON). The shots of the principal actors in Southern California settings don't mesh with the African scenery, and the dramatic content drops to the lackadaisical level of *JUNGLE HELL* (1956). Sabu's pathetic late entry in the jungle genre, which couldn't even salvage itself with a flying saucer and radioactive rocks. The climactic discovery of the gorillas' cave was obviously photographed at Los Angeles' famed Bronson Caverns.

Retromedia's DVD presents the picture in full-frame. The image is soft, but there are few distracting scratches or blemishes. The disc includes some supplements, such as a trailer preview that contains an alternate sequence in which Spanky removes Laura's nightgown. (The corresponding scene in the release version leaves Laura's clothing and dignity intact.) There's also a gallery of black-and-white stills and color lobby cards, one of which displays the lusty ape (Spanky, not Fuller) tentatively embracing an apparently topless Laura. For Ed Wood completists, label honcho Fred Olen Ray has provided a sample scene from his unfinished *BEACH BLANKET BLOODBATH* (1985), reportedly derived from Wood's final attempt at screenwriting.

John F. Black

#### CLASH OF THE TITANS Warner Home Video \$14.95

If the mythology of ancient Greece is your cup of tea, or if you think of Ray Harryhausen as a god, then this is the DVD for you. Released in 1981, *CLASH OF THE TITANS* was Harryhausen's last film as a special effects genius. Though it doesn't possess the sheer magic of *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS* (1963) or the Sinbad films, *CLASH* is a wonderful farewell film by a master of the genre.

Perseus (Harry Hamlin), the mortal son of Zeus (Laurence Olivier), must save the beautiful damsel in distress, Andromeda (Judi Bowker), from a grisly sacrificial death. Along the way, he battles monsters of myth and legend, all expertly imagined by Harryhausen. Giant scorpions, the winged horse, Pegasus; snake-haired Medusa—Harryhausen brings them to vivid life and shows us one last time why he's the master of stop-motion effects. The acting takes a back seat to the visual stimulus (something very common in a Harryhausen film), but the story is fluid and leads to a satisfying conclusion as Perseus battles the giant Kraken.

The letterboxed DVD is a fine addition to any fantasy film library, with a clean, clear picture. Part of the fun of DVDs is the opportunity to sample new languages, and this one boasts nine different subtitle choices—English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Korean, and Bahasa. Can one actually learn a new language watching *CLASH OF THE TITANS*? It's worth a try. The DVD also includes the theatrical trailer and two special featurettes—*A CONVERSATION WITH RAY HARRYHAUSEN*.





EN and A MAP OF MYTHS & MONSTERS, the latter a guidebook on the many creatures utilized in the film. The featurettes are highly enlightening, informative, and vital viewing for any Harryhausen (or fantasy) fan.

Edward Brock

**THE LADY EVE**  
**SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS**  
 The Criterion Collection  
 \$39.95 each

A pair of 1941 Preston Sturges comedy classics is gussied up and given Criterion's deluxe treatment in their DVD debut. *THE LADY EVE* stars Barbara Stanwyck as a wisecracking con artist who works her wiles on a wealthy, snake-loving millionaire (Henry Fonda), but ends up, naturally, falling in love with



him and going straight. *SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS* spins the fable of a successful but unfulfilled Hollywood director (Joe McCrea) longing to break out of a career rut and make "serious" art, but finding himself humbled by the experience of going out amongst the common folk (inclusive of a luscious Veronica Lake).

Like Orson Welles, Sturges had the talent to create a masterpiece (or two), but lacked the discipline to find a way (as would Billy Wilder and Alfred Hitchcock) to make his idiosyncrasies fit into the Hollywood machine while maintaining his artistic integrity. As sharp and as brilliant as he could be sloppy and crude,

the writer/director possessed an astonishing cleverness, as well as a devil-may-care approach to his work that could on occasion lead to his undoing (and ultimately did just that). His films are a patchwork quilt of the serious and the salacious, of savage wit and burlesque buffoonery. They defy categorization and make for some of the most singularly entertaining hours of cinema ever produced.

*SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS*, with its comic/earnest exploration of philosophical themes regarding life and art, may have been the riskiest of his projects and appears almost to have been made with the knowledge that it would be its creator's signature feature—it's one of the all-time greats and the best film of 1941 (*CITIZEN KANE* be damned). *THE LADY EVE*, although not as consistently fine (it starts marvelously but grows a bit wheezy by the final fade-out, and Stanwyck's English accent wouldn't fool anybody outside Flatbush) and certainly slight in comparison, nevertheless won an Oscar nomination for Sturges' screenplay.

*SULLIVAN'S DVD* offers the superior extras, with all sorts of goodies including the Emmy-winning documentary *PRESTON STURGES—THE RISE AND FALL OF AN AMERICAN DREAMER*, an articulate and incisive interview with widow Sandy Sturges, and even a 1951 radio chat with Hedda Hopper. The best supplement on the *LADY EVE* DVD is an overview of Edith Head's costuming. (She did wonders revamping Stanwyck's somewhat drab thirties image and meeting the challenge of the actress' "long waist" and "comparatively low rear end.") Other than that, there's a *LUX RADIO THEATER* broadcast with Babs and Ray Milland, as well as a lot of overanalytical blather courtesy of Peter Bogdanovich (a perfect choice for the job, or so it would seem, since his career did a Sturges-style flameout after a few years at the top) and most especially "noted film scholar" Marion Keane, whose insufferable commentary is likely to remind one of the unfortunate experience of being seated next to some loudmouthed know-it-all at the local movie revival house.

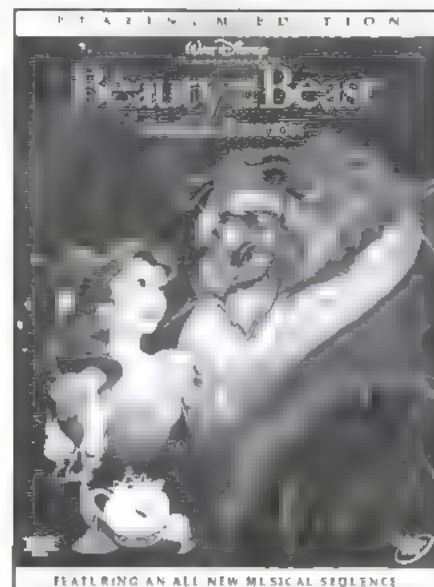
—Jon Anthony Carr

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**  
 Disney DVD  
 \$29.99

Disney's *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* (1991) owes as much of its charm to the classic form of musical theater as it does to a classic children's story. Here is a witty and moving animated feature that took audiences and critics by storm in its initial theatrical release, moved on to spawn a direct-to-video sequel, and, in a series of firsts, became the first "rough-animated" feature to play the New York Film Festival; the first animated feature in history to be nominated for a Best Picture Oscar; the first Disney feature to be mounted as a true Broadway musical; and the first Disney rerelease to be shown on IMAX screens nationwide. *BEAUTY*

AND *THE BEAST* is the pinnacle of Disney animation: a charming tale, a voice-talent cast of musical theater veterans, lush animation (with a dash of computer-generated imagery), fine lyrics by the late Howard Ashman set to a score by the redoubtable Alan Menken, and a screenplay by Linda Woolverton that reads like a live-action film. Ultimately *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* is a film that entertains, dazzles, and astonishes with each new twist of its "tale as old as time."

The tale is familiar: handsome prince gets turned into a hideous beast by an old crone to teach the boy that "beauty is only skin deep." The curse affects the entire castle, turning its human elements into fast-talking, all-singing, all-dancing



household items, such as teapots, feather dusters, clocks and candelabra, and leaving them in an inhuman state until the curse can be lifted by a love that sees not with the eyes, but with the heart. Enter Belle, bookish but beautiful, whose misguided inventor father has wandered into the desolate castle by mistake, only to be held prisoner by the wretched Beast. Belle sacrifices her own freedom for her father, becoming the Beast's captive. Will Belle see into the Beast's tortured soul and find the prince that once was, or will the castle's inhabitants spend the rest of their lives in vastly altered states?

The animation is first rate, and meticulously preserved in three versions on Disney DVD's Platinum Edition. These pulchritudinous presentations devote two discs to their representative films, the second disc holding an easily navigable cornucopia of valuable supplemental features. The comforting voice of Angela Lansbury sets up "Mrs. Potts' Engaging Treats," which features a lovely tribute to past Disney successes in "The Story Behind the Story." "Cogsworth & Lumiere's Library" features David Ogden Stiers and Jerry Orbach, who serve up a

Continued on page 76





# THE CREATURE INTERVIEWS CONTINUED

**S**carlet Street's coverage of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954) and its two sequels (1955's REVENGE OF THE CREATURE and 1956's THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US) began last issue and included the first installment of interviews with cast members from all three films. We continue our coverage this issue . . .



## JULIE ADAMS

interviewed by  
Michael Michalski

**Scarlet Street:** Was there ever any talk about reprising your role of Kay Lawrence in REVENGE OF THE CREATURE?

**Julie Adams:** No, it never came up, and I never really pumped for it or anything.

**SS:** You must have thought the Gill Man was going to be the strangest costar you ever had but that same year you met a talking mule in FRANCIS JOINS THE WACS. Your human costar was Donald O'Connor.

**JA:** Oh, it was absolutely great! Donald was—and is—such a great person, and so gifted, so talented. It was great fun to work with him. At that time, he was going through a period of reflecting on being a child actor and missing out on certain things. I said, "But, Donald, you learned all these wonderful things—you can sing and dance without even thinking about it!" But everybody has a different point of view on their life. We became friends during the picture.

**SS:** Did you enjoy working in comedy?

**JA:** Yes, I did, very much. I really love comedy. I learned more about comedy when I was not at Universal and started doing some plays. I learned how to do comedy from the audience. You learn on the stage, really—at least I did, because

I didn't know if I really had that kind of gift. Later, when I was doing the recurring role on MURDER SHE WROTE with Angela Lansbury, it was a comedy part too. I had a great time doing that.

**SS:** It was during the fifties that you became associated with Rock Hudson and his long-time lover, George Nader. There were even stories that you married Nader at one time.

**JA:** Not no—before I married Ray Danton, I was married to Leonard Stern for about two-and-a-half years. A very brief marriage. He's a comedy writer. He was one of the creators of GEL SMART.

**SS:** So you were never linked romantically to George Nader?

**JA:** We worked in about three movies together, but we never were a romantic item, no.

**SS:** Cosmopolitan magazine essentially ruined his career. Do you recall Hollywood living in fear of witch-hunters eager to either out people or expose them as communists?

**JA:** By then, I wasn't under contract anymore, but when I was first under contract, there was an atmosphere in town about the Red Scare and the blacklisting and so on. There was that element in town, but it didn't affect me too much because I came from Arkansas and was a very non-political person. I saw what was going on, though. The first movie that I worked in, BRIGHT VICTORY, had Will Geer in it. That was one of Will's last pictures before the blacklist hit him, and he was out of work for many, many years. He was a wonderful man and actor.

**SS:** You worked with the Gill Man, with Francis the Talking Mule, and then you worked with the Hound Dog man himself, Elvis Presley, in 1965's TICKLE ME.

**JA:** He was so . . . how can I say? There was a shyness about him, and he was extremely courteous and polite—which is a Southern thing, isn't it? He talked with great feeling about when he was in the service and how important that was to him, to do well and to just be one of the regular guys. I think the most fun he had on the picture was when he and his friends from Memphis, who were the stunt guys, staged a fight and got to break up the whole bar. (Laughs)

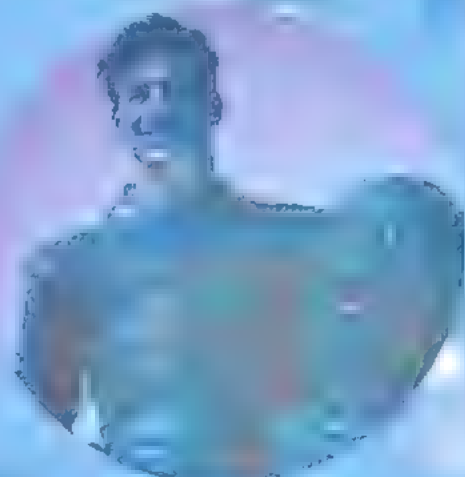
**SS:** He didn't take filmmaking very seriously?

**JA:** He certainly tried to do his best, always. There was a scene—I was the quote

"older woman" in the film, who owned this dude ranch—there was a scene where I call him into my office, and pursue him around the desk and kiss him. (Laughs) It was so funny, because he was bashful! I kept thinking, "Oh, my goodness—this big sex symbol is embarrassed!" There were a lot of different facets to Elvis Presley.

**SS:** Your husband at the time, Ray Danton, was working in locales such as Spain and

Continued on page 34



## RICOU BROWNING

interviewed by  
Michael Michalski

**Scarlet Street:** Concerning FLIPPER—how did you come up with a story about a boy and his dolphin?

**Ricou Browning:** It came about over a period of time, dating back before any film business that I did in terms of Hollywood. I did other types of film work prior to that. We used to do Grantland Rice Sports films at Wakulla Springs. I worked there as a lifeguard and used to assist in those kinds of films. We did what I'd call gimmick shows at the end of newsreels. This was back in the days before television.

**SS:** What types of gimmick shows?

**RB:** We did these when I was a young, young person. Newt Perry used to manage Wakulla Springs. Grant and Rice did a film on him, calling him "The Human Fish," because he was a great underwater man. He created the technique of hose breathing and taught me how to do it. During the war, they always needed some relief at the end of the newsreel, and they'd cut to something cute—chimpanzees or something. They'd send a cancrater around the United States filming different things. Well, we shot a lot of things underwater that were supposedly cute—like an underwater picnic, for instance. We pulled a Model T Ford underwater and a bunch of kids were sitting in it. They'd get out and eat and drink underwater. We did all kinds of crazy things—alligator stuff, wrestling, catching snakes.

**SS:** And you participated in these films?

*Continued on page 43*



## LORI NELSON

interviewed by  
Kevin G. Shinnick

**Scarlet Street:** In 1955, the same year you went underwater with the Gull Man, you appeared in *UNDERWATER* with Jane Russell.

**Lori Nelson:** I was still under contract at Universal and they loaned me to Howard Hughes. He wanted me and I wanted to do it very badly, but the studio was very hesitant to let me go. I begged and begged, and finally they said I could do it. Of course, I got my contract salary and they got big money as a loanout fee. I was supposed to star, but Jane Russell had one more picture on her contract with Hughes and he said he had to use her. He said, "We'll write in a part for you." So that's what they did, and I figured "Well, better than nothin'!"

**SS:** It must have been interesting to work for Howard Hughes.

**LN:** Oh, yes! He owned TWA and he'd just inaugurated the very first TWA flight to Las Vegas from Los Angeles. He got a whole bunch of Hollywood celebrities for the inauguration. I went along with a lot of the other celebrities and press people on the plane. We had a nice, long weekend with gambling and parties and all kinds of things. I had another birthday party—I turned 21—and Howard Hughes gave me a party in Las Vegas. He escorted me all that night, from hotel to hotel casino, because I had never been anywhere at that point; I was pretty sheltered. I was chaperoned by the studio publicity department at RKO. (Laughs) They followed us from hotel to hotel, and he gave me money to gamble with and showed me how to gamble. It was quite an experience!

**SS:** How did you do with the gambling?

**LN:** I won a few! (Laughs) Mostly slot machines.

**SS:** Meanwhile, back in the water—there's a scene in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* that looks quite brutal when the Gull Man is struggling with you and you're clinging to a buoy. Was that a double or did you actually do that scene?

**LN:** That was me! Ginger Stanley did some of the shots, but I did most of my

own swimming in that film. And the skydiving, too—most of the shots in the tank were done at Marineland in Florida, in the actual underwater tanks with the fish. When you see a shark or a manta ray going by—well, we were in there with them! (Laughs) They said there was no problem because they fed the fish every hour, so all we could do was say, "Okay, we'll have to believe you!"

**SS:** Were you a good swimmer before starring in *REVENGE*?

**LN:** I swam as a kid growing up, but I wasn't that proficient. I certainly got proficient before I did that film! I practiced a lot!

**SS:** Was it difficult working with a man in a monster suit?

**LN:** Well, it's just another part of acting. You pretend you're actually being abducted by some kind of a monster. You get into it, you have to, really, otherwise, it's not believable.

**SS:** Your leading man was John Agar.

**LN:** John Agar was a very sweet man—very sweet, nice, gentle person. He always was.

**SS:** Was it always Ricou Browning in the Creature outfit for your scenes?

**LN:** Ricou Browning did all three Creature movies, he did all the underwater swimming and all the underwater photography. He was an expert swimmer and very talented, but he was not the "walking around" Creature. Tom Hen-

*Continued on page 36*



## BEN CHAPMAN

interviewed by  
Michael Michalski

**Scarlet Street:** Did you ever take the opportunity to have a little fun while in the suit?

**Ben Chapman:** We had a running gag going, but we had to knock it off. Between shooting, I'd simply go out into the water, swim around, and do my own thing. They'd call me in and say, "Rock Hudson is bringing some people to see you as the Gull Man." So I would swim out to the middle of the lake. I'd sit in the middle of this man-made lake; it's only six feet deep, and I'm six five, so I had no problem. Rock would come close to the shore, and he'd point—and I'd just sit there. When everybody got around the shore, I'd start moving in closer like an alligator until I was in about two feet of water and about 10 feet from the shore—and I'd leap straight up in the air! (Laughs) Well, after awhile they said to knock it off. They were afraid someone was going to die of a heart attack!

**SS:** Did you and Ricou confer with each other, to make sure you moved the same way?

*Continued on page 45*



## TOM HENNESY

interviewed by  
Michael Michalski

**Scarlet Street:** You alluded earlier in this interview to a homosexual casting couch.

**Tom Hennesy:** Yes, there was a casting couch for men. For women, it was particularly bad. I knew a lot of actresses who told me things that happened to them. It was shameful. It was really too bad, but it's still going on, of course—and it isn't considered such a shocking thing anymore. It was, in those days.

*Continued on page 47*



*"All I'd heard from everybody was, 'Don't eat too much. Don't drink too much.' And Dennis Hopper came in with his poncho and his cowboy hat and said, 'Do you want to go to a pig roast?' I thought, 'When I am ever going to be invited to another pig roast in Peru?' So we piled into taxi cabs and a pickup truck and we went to the village. It was unbelievable! They had this nice, foamy drink—it wasn't particularly alcoholic—and I drank it and ate everything! I threw caution to the winds!"*

#### JULIE ADAMS

*Continued from page 32*

*Italy. Did you get a chance to accompany him on any of his shoots?*

**JA:** The boys and I spent one summer in Rome, but he really wasn't shooting yet, he was preparing a film. We had a wonderful summer. Of course, with the kids in school, it was hard for me to go on many of his locations. That was part of the strain on the marriage. Eventually, we split up.

**SS:** After the birth of your children, Steve and Mitchell, you concentrated on television work to allow for more time to raise them. Was it a difficult choice?

**JA:** It was the right choice—your children are your children forever. The picture business comes and goes. It was the right thing to do. I worked in television and so on, but not nearly as much.

**SS:** Did the children follow their parents' lead into show business?

**JA:** Yes, they did. Mitchell Danton is a film editor. He's working on DAWSON'S CREEK. Steve Danton is a first assistant director; he's done many films. He worked on THELMA AND LOUISE, he worked on THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER and a great number of pictures.

**SS:** Your TV career is almost as prolific as your movie career. Do you prefer one medium over the other?

**JA:** It all depends on the script and the role. Television can be just as interesting as a movie if you have a good director and an interesting script. Some of the anthology series from those days were quite interesting.

I had a wonderful role in a MARCUS WELBY M.D. episode. I had good roles on PERRY MASON, too.

**SS:** Now, speaking of scripts, or the lack thereof, you had the unique opportunity to work with Dennis Hopper on his best film following LAST RIDER—namely, THE LAST MOVIE, in 1971. Hopper was in his "mad hippie" period.

**JA:** Well, I got a bootleg copy of a script—we were not supposed to see a script, because we were improvising. Actually, it was fun. I thought, "Okay, we're playing this game. I can play this game." I'm not displeased with my per-

formance in the picture at all. I was lucky, too. I was only in the one section, so I didn't have to try and make sense of the whole story. I think it was very hard for Dennis to control the picture. He was starring in it, directing it, and improvising. But it was a very interesting idea.

**SS:** What was it like on the set itself? Was it as drug-laden as one might imagine?

**JA:** Well, if people were using drugs, I never saw it. I'm the original square of the world, so it was funny, me being there with that crowd. I never saw any evidence of rugs on the set and Dennis was working hard. I just think that the whole thing got away from him. But it was fascinating; Peru was a completely other world. The group that was in my section of the picture—Don Gordon, Donna Vicalla, and the other actors—we had flown down together, spent the night in Lima, and then arrived in Cuzco the next morning. Well, Cuzco is around 12,000 feet above sea level, so all I'd heard from everybody was, "Don't eat too much. Don't drink too much." (Laughs) We had just checked into this funny little hotel and it was Sunday, so they weren't shooting. And Dennis came in with his poncho and his cowboy hat and said, "Do you want to go to a pig roast?" (Laughs) In Chincheros, where they were shooting, the villagers were giving a party for the people on the film. I thought, "When I am ever going to be invited to another pig roast in Peru?" So we piled into taxi cabs and a pickup truck and we went to the village. It was unbelievable! We saw an Inca Temple of the Moon. They had this nice, foamy drink—it wasn't particularly alcoholic—and I drank it and ate everything. I threw caution to the winds! (Laughs)

**SS:** How did you land your role in THE LAST MOVIE?

**JA:** Actually, Donna Vicalla had played my daughter on a television show. Donna met with Dennis, and he asked, "Do you know anybody who could play your mother?" She suggested me. So I had an interview and talked about the part and didn't really read anything—that's how it happened.

**SS:** Would you have liked to have appeared in more films in that vein, with an improvisation approach?

**JA:** I enjoyed THE LAST MOVIE. I really did—surprisingly so, since basically my experience had been in a more structured environment. I don't know if that's the





**LEFT:** No wonder poor Julie Adams is cowering in fear from Ben Chapman in this publicity shot for *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* (1954)—she's afraid he's going to bump her head on another fake rock! **RIGHT:** Adams, Richard Carlson, and Nestor Paiva discuss a scene with director Jack Arnold, the man responsible for Universal's best sci-fi films of the fifties.

best way to make a movie, but I enjoyed it. It's like the time I played the mother in *SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR* for public television. Stacy Keach directed it. John Houseman and Andy Griffith were in it as well. Stacy used theater-acting exercises in our two weeks of rehearsal time. I enjoyed that process very much.

**SS:** You worked with Dennis Hopper again, in a 1989 film called *BACKTRACK*.

**JA:** He'd changed a great deal, now that he was completely off drugs. But he was still Dennis. He still enjoyed working on the edge. I had an interesting character, but my part got cut down. I only have two or three lines left, but it was nice to work with Jodie Foster.

**SS:** With all that Western experience behind you, it wasn't until 1974 that you worked with the biggest name in American Western lore—John Wayne. The film, *McQ*, wasn't even a Western.

**JA:** It was very interesting to go in and do one scene with John Wayne, playing his ex-wife. The big thing was to try to erase John Wayne, the icon, and just relate to this guy as a cop. I really, really enjoyed working with him. He told a few self-deprecatory stories about things John Ford had said to him; he was very humorous, and just as charming as he was on the screen.

**SS:** You appeared in a handful of horror films, including 1975's *PSYCHIC KILLER*, directed by your ex-husband, Ray Danton. Do you prepare differently for a horror film than you would for a drama, Western, or comedy?

**JA:** Not really. You just take yourself into another realm, where things happen that are completely strange. You try to bring truth to that. I enjoyed working with Ray. He was a wonderful director.

**SS:** He showed an affinity for making horror films, too.

**JA:** Yes, *PSYCHIC KILLER* was pretty good for what it was. Ray did many episodes of the series *QUINCY*, and a number of *CAGNEY AND LACEY*'s. Actors loved to work with him. He really was wonderful with actors—a very good director. Ray was one of the brightest people I've ever known. He graduated from high school very young and went into the theater and was a volatile personality. He was a very good person, but he had a lot of temperament. He was cut out to be a director, because, as an actor, he was always frustrated that he couldn't control things. He did not easily suffer people who didn't know as much as he did. That kind of attitude does not move you forward too much. But he was very gifted, and he loved the theater, loved the arts and good acting. He was very passionate about those things. Unfortunately, when things didn't go his way and his career didn't move forward as well as he'd hoped, it was extremely difficult for him—and that type of person can be very hard to live with.

**SS:** *PSYCHIC KILLER* featured one of your *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* costars—Whit Bissell. He was such a nice guy in *CREATURE* but in *PSYCHIC KILLER* he's rather smarmy.

**JA:** We didn't work together on that film, but we saw each other at the screenings. Whit was simply a lovely man who you'd be happy to work with every day of your life. He was a charming fellow, and a good actor—he knew how to be smarmy! (Laughs)

**SS:** Another film of yours around this time was *THE KILLER INSIDE ME*, a film noir based on a novel by Jim Thompson.

**JA:** I'm not sure it was ever released, and I'm not sure if I ever saw the completed film. It was directed by Stacy Keach. We went up to Montana and shot it around

Butte. I only worked about a week, but once again, Stacy Keach has a very interesting mind.

**SS:** Many fans are not aware that you have a number of episodes of *MURDER SHE WROTE* to your credit, starring opposite Angela Lansbury and many other veteran stars.

**JA:** I just loved working with Angela Lansbury. She's just as charming as Jessica Fletcher is, and her talent is so great that it was a great privilege to be on that show. I also loved my character, Eve, as she evolved—she liked men and she liked money! (Laughs) She was lots of fun to play.

**SS:** Your fellow *Creature* alumna, Lori Nelson, once said in an interview that, as actresses grow older, the roles get fewer and fewer. However, you've kept working without skipping a beat. Don't you find roles more difficult to find?

**JA:** Well, yes, definitely—but you have to be willing to change. I was lucky in the sense that I never looked like an ingénue. I always looked a little more grown up, so I could make that transition a little easier than someone who was very girlie-looking. One can't try to stay stuck at one age. I did a soap for a while and had a good time on that.

**SS:** In fact, you were nominated for a Soap Opera Digest Award for your performance on *CAPITOL*.

**JA:** Yes—and, of course, on *MURDER SHE WROTE*, I was playing my own age, too. That's the key—to keep moving forward as your age moves forward. There were times when things were slower. There's an awkward age, where you're not really young, anymore, and you're not "kind of old" yet. (Laughs) They don't know what to do with you!

**SS:** Over the course of your long and prolific career, what was the biggest change in the entertainment industry?





**JA:** I think the breakup of the studio system was the biggest change. I was probably among the last of the contract players. That was a big change. Everything became much more fragmented. The nearest thing that actors have to a home now, is if they get a job on a TV series, where they can have a base and a family. The control of movies also changed greatly. Studio heads used to control things and now it's very splintered. Actors or directors can be completely in charge. Sometimes that's great—and sometimes that isn't!

**SS:** Looking back, do you have a favorite role or project?

**JA:** I think the best work I ever did was playing the mother in *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*. I did that in 1959 at the Skylight Theatre in Los Angeles. It's a great play, and I really had a great affinity for that part. It's a long way from *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. (Laughs)

**SS:** Speaking of your lagoon friend, they're talking again about a remake.

**JA:** They've been talking about that for years! You know something? It doesn't really matter. Whatever happens is fine. It's amazing that our picture has inspired such affection over the years and has such a following. I think that, if they redo it in another way that's fine, too—but I think our film will still have people who will enjoy it.

#### LORI NELSON

*Continued from page 33*

nessy was over six feet tall, and he was on land in *REVENGE*. Ben Chapman did *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*; he was that "walking around" Creature, and he was very tall. They had two suits, because Ron Brown was very short and they had to make a smaller suit for him. They also had to make some modifications, because it had to be lighter and much more flexible for him to be able to swim in it.

**SS:** He makes the Creature look very graceful in the water.

**LN:** Yes, and I've never seen anybody who could hold his breath as long as he could. It seemed like he could swim forever without coming up for a breath. He'd just swim out of shot and grab a quick breath and come back.

36 SCARLET TREAT



**SS:** What was Jack Arnold like as a director?

**LN:** He was good. He was a very nice, fun guy—very warm and friendly—but Jack Arnold was quite a wolf in those days. I don't know whether it's that well-known even now, but it was pretty well known in the industry that he was always on the make with the girls. I was no exception when we went on location to Florida. He'd already been coming on to me at the studio, and when we went to Florida he arranged to have his room right next to mine, with connecting doors. Well, when I found out, I asked the hairdresser, Lillian, "Do you want to room with me?" She said she'd love to, and that was the end of that! (Laughs) Actually, it didn't dissuade him very much; he always wanted to come in and give me foot massages and back rubs. I kept refusing, and finally he gave up. It was real casting couch stuff, and the only thing in my career that anyone ever tried that with me.

**SS:** Was the *REVENGE* vs. *WALKING WILD* Atlanta on the set a lot?

**LN:** Yes, he had his hand right in there. It wasn't that he cal ed the shots on the set, but he hung around and chatted and socialized. I didn't have much of anything to do with him, personally. Jack worked very closely with us, though. He was very much an actor's director—or an actress' director, considering his reputation. (Laughs)

**SS:** Was it a shock for you, moving from Universal to a low-budget film such as *DAY THE WORLD ENDED*?

**LN:** Oh, it was quite a shock. I'd starred with famous actors on big-budget pictures. I made *WALKING MY BABY BACK HOME* and the Francis the Talking Mule pictures with Donald O'Connor, and I worked with Tony Curtis and Rock Hudson and Jimmy Stewart and Barbara Stanwyck. To go from that to those low-budget pictures was quite a comedown, but as you look back, they were great fun. And when we actually did them, it was great fun. Frank Gorshon was in *HOT ROD GIRL*, and other people who went on to do very good things.

**SS:** Speaking of Donald O'Connor—is it true that he didn't like making the Francis films? Was it obvious while working with him?

**LN:** It wasn't obvious to me. He seemed to always have a good time; he seemed to

always have fun. He may very well have felt that his talents were wasted in the Francis films, since he was such a wonderful dancer—right up there with Gene Kelly, which he proved in *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN*.

**SS:** Paul Blaisdell was the man in the monster suit in *THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED*.

**LN:** He was instrumental in designing the suit as well. He was pretty small, though, for a monster! There was one incident when he fell down and couldn't get up, because the costume was so awkward. We had to help him up and everybody laughed about it.

**SS:** Blaisdell also had to carry on while wearing that costume.

**LN:** Yes, and with him being a small man and wearing that heavy suit, it did get a little difficult. The picture was shot in the valley. We did some shots at a restaurant that's still there, The Sportsman's Lodge. They had a little lake and we did a lot of shots around there, with the ducks and everything.

**SS:** Budget aside, what was Roger Corman like as a director?

**LN:** Fast! Fast, but good! It was early in his career, of course, and he was kind of rough around the edges, but he was nice. **SS:** Your costars included Richard Denning, who was in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, and Mike Connors.

**LN:** Richard Denning had been making films since the early forties, and he was still a very good-looking man. As for Mike, well, he was "Touch" Connors back then. His agent was Henry Wilson, who was gay and had the habit of signing handsome young pretty boys to contracts and giving them rather exotic names—for instance, Rock Hudson. Rip Torn, Tab Hunter, and Race Gentry. Not that all the pretty boys were gay themselves, of course! Only Rock and Tab were gay—as far as I know! (Laughs)

**SS:** In addition to television guest appearances, you starred in the comedy series *HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE*, with Barbara Eden and Merry Anders.

**LN:** That was toward the end of my career, before I married Johnny Mann. I did the pilot with Doc Avadon, who was married to Dick Avadon, the famous photographer, and Charlotte Austin. They



didn't pick up the other two girls, but they wanted me and they cast the other parts with Barbara Eden and Merry Anders. Merry had been around for a while but Barbara had just come down from San Francisco, she was a chorus girl up there. She had never done any acting and she was signed by 20th Century Fox, which was producing the series. Years before, when I was at Universal, my starting salary was \$75 a week. By the time I did *HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE*, I was up to about \$1,700 a week. Barbara's salary at that time was \$200 a week, so she had to do the series for \$200 and I was making \$1,700. She didn't like that very much! As a matter of fact, Barbara hated the series, she hated the part she played, she hated her clothes, her hair—she hated every minute of it! She won't even tell anybody that she did it! (Laughs) She doesn't like to talk about it, and it was her first acting job in Hollywood.

**SS:** Did you enjoy it?

**LN:** It was great fun and, as a matter of fact, we had fun doing it. Well, I had fun!

**SS:** How long did it last?

**LN:** Well, I did 39 episodes. They had the option to pick us up and I broke my option.

**PAGE 36 LEFT:** Julie Adams was one of *FOUR GIRLS IN TOWN* (1957), and the guy was George Nader. Also pictured: Marianne Cook, Gia Scala, Flaa Martinelli, and Herbert Anderson. **PAGE 36 RIGHT:** Rock Hudson had his first lead role in *THE LAWLESS BREED* (1953), and Julie Adams played the woman in his life. **TOP LEFT:** Two Gill Man girlfriends—Lori Nelson and Julie Adams—costarred in *BEND OF THE RIVER* (1952), with James Stewart and Jay C. Flippen. **TOP RIGHT:** Both Adams and Nelson appeared in a Francis the Talking Mule comedy. Here's Nelson in *FRANCIS GOES TO WEST POINT* (1952), with star Donald O'Connor. **RIGHT:** When *THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED* (1956), Forrest J Ackerman was there to teach lovely Lori and ugly mutant (Paul Blaisdell) the language of the future—Esperanto.

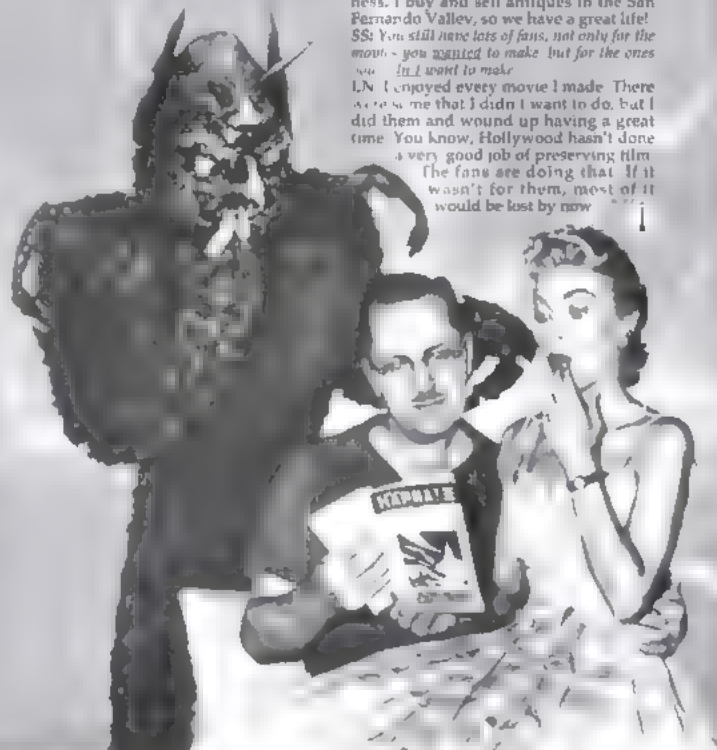


tract. I'd been at it so long, I wanted to build my career and I didn't want

another daughter and I just never went back to it. I raised my daughters, Johnny and I didn't stay married that long, we separated when the girls were four and seven. We didn't divorce for about five or six years. We stayed separated, and then he met somebody that he wanted to marry, so we got our divorce. I was single for 15 years before I met my husband, Joe Reiner. He was born and raised in Manhattan. He worked a beat in New York City for five years, then he moved to California. We have four children and four grandchildren between us. He retired from the LAPD 20 years ago and he's a special investigator with an insurance company today. I'm in the antique business. I buy and sell antiques in the San Fernando Valley, so we have a great life!

**SS:** You still have lots of fans, not only for the movie—you agreed to make—but for the ones who didn't want to make.

**LN:** I enjoyed every movie I made. There were some that I didn't want to do, but I did them and wound up having a great time. You know, Hollywood hasn't done a very good job of preserving film. The fans are doing that. If it wasn't for them, most of it would be lost by now.





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*Continued from page 33*

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SS: Was the *REVENGE* producer, William Alland, on the set a lot?

LN: Yes, he had his hand right in there. It wasn't that he called the shots on the set, but he hung around and chatted and socialized. I didn't have much of anything to do with him, personally. Jack worked very closely with us, though. He was very much an actor's director—or an actress' director, considering his reputation. (Laughs)

SS: Was it a shock for you, moving from Universal to a low-budget film such as *DAY THE WORLD ENDED*?

LN: Oh, it was quite a shock! I'd started with famous actors on big-budget pictures. I made *WALKING MY BABY BACK HOME* and the Francis the Talking Mule pictures with Donald O'Connor, and I worked with Tony Curtis and Rock Hudson and Jimmy Stewart and Barbara Stanwyck. To go from that to those low-budget pictures was quite a comedown, but as you look back, they were great fun. And when we actually did them, it was great fun. Frank Gorshin was in *HOT ROD GIRL*, and other people who went on to do very good things.

SS: Speaking of Donald O'Connor—is it true that he didn't like making the Francis films? Was it obvious while working with him?

LN: It wasn't obvious to me! He seemed to always have a good time, he seemed to

always have fun. He may very well have felt that his talents were wasted in the Francis films, since he was such a wonderful dancer—right up there with Gene Kelly, which he proved in *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN*.

SS: Paul Blaisdell was the man in the monster suit for *THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED*.

LN: He was instrumental in designing the suit as well. He was pretty small, though, for a monster! There was one incident when he fell down and couldn't get up, because the costume was so awkward. We had to help him up and everybody laughed about it.

SS: Blaisdell also had to carry you while wearing that costume.

LN: Yes, and with him being a small man and wearing that heavy suit, it did get a little difficult. The picture was shot in the valley. We did some shots at a restaurant that's still there, The Sportsman's Lodge. They had a little lake and we did a lot of shots around there, with the ducks and everything.

SS: Budget aside, what was Roger Corman like as a director?

LN: Fast! Fast, but good! It was early in his career, of course, and he was kind of rough around the edges, but he was nice.

SS: Your costars included Richard Denning, who was in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, and Mike Connors.

LN: Richard Denning had been making films since the early forties, and he was still a very good looking man. As for Mike, well, he was "Touch" Connors back then. His agent was Henry Wilson, who was gay and had the habit of signing handsome young pretty boys to contracts and giving them rather exotic names—for instance, Rock Hudson, Rip Torn, Tab Hunter, and Race Gentry. Not that all the pretty boys were gay themselves, of course! Only Rock and Tab were gay—as far as I know! (Laughs)

SS: In addition to television guest appearances, you starred in the comedy series *HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE*, with Barbara Eden and Merry Anders.

LN: That was toward the end of my career, before I married Johnny Mann. I did the pilot with Doe Avadon, who was married to Dick Avadon, the famous photographer, and Charlotte Austin. They





didn't pick up the other two girls, but they wanted me and they cast the other parts with Barbara Eden and Merry Anders. Merry had been around for a while, but Barbara had just come down from San Francisco; she was a chorus girl up there. She had never done any acting and she was signed by 20th Century Fox, which was producing the series. Years before, when I was at Universal, my starting salary was \$75 a week. By the time I did *HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE*, I was up to about \$1,700 a week. Barbara's salary at that time was \$200 a week, so she had to do the series for \$200 and I was making \$1,700. She didn't like that very much! As a matter of fact, Barbara hated the series, she hated the part she played, she hated her clothes, her hair—she hated every minute of it! She won't even tell anybody that she did it! (Laughs) She doesn't like to talk about it, and it was her first acting job in Hollywood.

**SS:** Did you enjoy it?

**LN:** It was great fun and, as a matter of fact, we had fun doing it. Well, I had fun!

**SS:** How long did it last?

**LN:** Well, I did 39 episodes. They had the option to pick us up and I broke my con-

tract. I'd been at it so long. I wanted to build my career and I didn't want to do another 39 episodes of *HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE*. They got Lisa Gay, who was Debra Paget's younger sister, and they were going to do 39 more episodes, but they only did 13. I'm sure Barbara was happy about it! (Laughs)

**SS:** Why did you retire from acting?

**LN:** Well, I got married. I met and fell in love with and married Johnny Mann of the Johnny Mann Singers. I did one or two TV episodes after that, and then I got pregnant with my first child, my first daughter, and I quit the business. I had

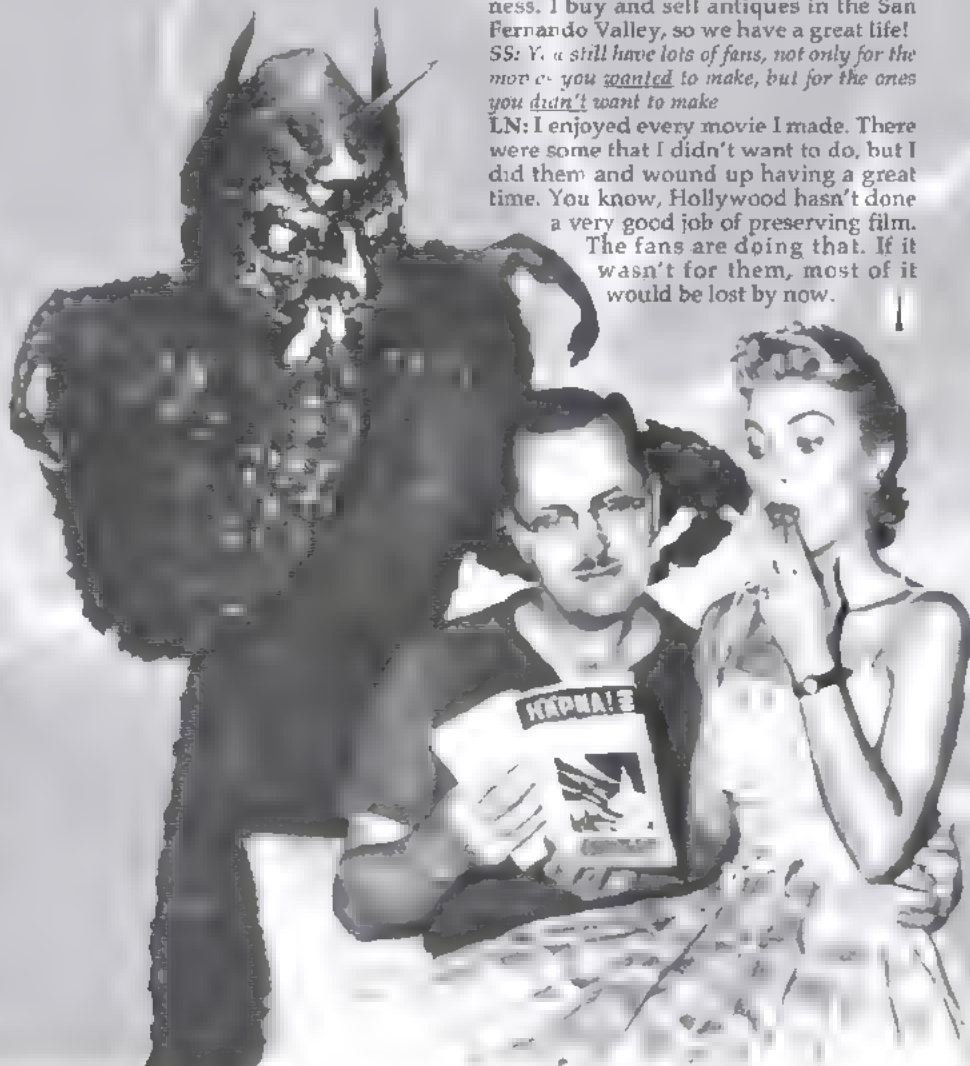
another daughter and I just never went back to it. I raised my daughters. Johnny and I didn't stay married that long; we separated when the girls were four and seven. We didn't divorce for about five or six years. We stayed separated, and then he met somebody that he wanted to marry, so we got our divorce. I was single for 15 years before I met my husband, Joe Reiner. He was born and raised in Manhattan. He walked a beat in New York City for five years, then he moved to California. We have four children and four grandchildren between us. He retired from the LAPD 20 years ago and he's a special investigator with an insurance company today. I'm in the antique business. I buy and sell antiques in the San Fernando Valley, so we have a great life!

**SS:** You still have lots of fans, not only for the movies you wanted to make, but for the ones you didn't want to make.

**LN:** I enjoyed every movie I made. There were some that I didn't want to do, but I did them and wound up having a great time. You know, Hollywood hasn't done a very good job of preserving film.

The fans are doing that. If it wasn't for them, most of it would be lost by now.

**PAGE 36 LEFT:** Julie Adams was one of *FOUR GIRLS IN TOWN* (1957), and the guy was George Nader. Also pictured: Marianne Cook, Gia Scala, Elsa Martinelli, and Herbert Anderson. **PAGE 36 RIGHT:** Rock Hudson had his first lead role in *THE LAWLESS BREED* (1953), and Julie Adams played the woman in his life. **TOP LEFT:** Two Gill Man girlfriends—Lori Nelson and Julie Adams—co-starred in *BEND OF THE RIVER* (1952), with James Stewart and Jay C. Flippen. **TOP RIGHT:** Both Adams and Nelson appeared in a Francis the Talking Mule comedy. Here's Nelson in *FRANCIS GOES TO WEST POINT* (1952), with star Donald O'Connor. **RIGHT:** When the *DAY THE WORLD ENDED* (1956), Forrest J Ackerman was there to teach lovely Lori and ugly mutant (Paul Blaisdell) the language of the future—Esperanto.



# THE CREATURE'S GENE POOL

by Harry H. Long

THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (1954) is inarguably Universal's most successful thriller from the fifties; it alone generated sequels (there was no IT CAME BACK FROM OUTER SPACE) and spawned a subgenre of aquatic humanoid chillers. The attraction to budget-conscious producers is obvious: outdoor locales, a cast clad in swimwear or L. L. Bean, and a title character portrayed by a stuntman, all of which spell "t-h-r-i-l-l-e-r." True, underwater photography mightn't come cheap (many of the carbons omitted that anyway, sacrificing the visceral drowning aspect) and one ought to have a really cool suit, but there were plenty of hungry makeup artists who could supply one of those on the cheap. Surprisingly, two years passed before the first offspring—THE SHE CREATURE (1956)

To its credit, THE SHE CREATURE has an original plot involving a sideshow hypnotist (Chester Morris) causing a prehistoric ghost to rise from the sea and wreak homicidal havoc. Director Edward L. Cahn delivers a reasonably effective film that needs few apologies. He's aided by producer Alex Gordon's penchant for hiring actors who no longer interested the major studios. (Tom Conway, Frieda Inescort, and El Brendel also appear.) Nor does it hurt that the titular creature was created by Paul Blaisdell, who usually came up with something memorable for peanuts; this is one of his masterpieces. The film isn't completely successful—Cahn's setups are too often uninspired and there are a few too many longeurs—but the somber twilight beach sequences cast a haunting spell.

That same year brought forth the very similar THE PHANTOM FROM 10,000 LEAGUES, also scripted by Lou Rusoff (which might account for many structural similarities). Both also have the drab sets that characterized many TV productions of the period and boast wonderful Ronald Stein scores. Here, the last is the most notable ingredient; twilit shots recall SHE CREATURE, but they're few and far between and the rest is unexceptional. The Phantom is an unconvincing human-sized dinosaur that mostly lurks underwater waiting for victims to stumble across it.



Almost as impoverished, 1959's ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES at least has more aggressive monsters and a nicely judged pace to keep it entertaining. Bernard Kowalski directed, but it has all the earmarks of producer Roger Corman's pre Poe productions: fluid camerawork, capable acting—particularly from Yvette Vickers doing her patented strumpet routine and Bruno VeSota as her cuckolded husband—and laughably cheap monsters. (Kowalski wisely limits their visibility.) The scenes of the monsters feasting on their victims are pretty gruesome for the time. LEECHES is a perfect fifties B movie; it has no pretensions of being anything more than cheesy-sleazy undemanding entertainment.

The only spinoff originating from a major studio is THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE (1959), though 20th Century Fox lifted somewhat from its own 1958 THE FLY (and more from 1953's THE MAZE). The cast is stocked with genre favorites Beverly Garland, Lon Chaney Jr., Richard Crane, Bruce Bennett, and Inescort (again), and the direction is by capable old hand Roy Del Ruth, so the clichés play very comfortably. An adequate budget helps float the outrageous plot—George Macready finds his experiments with reptile extracts turn his patients into quasigators—and the production design eschews the obvious by placing the laboratory in a Victorian house. Unfortunately, the makeup is a real disappointment (despite the participation of Dick Smith) and the film limps to its hasty finale as a result. That and an embarrassing performance by Chaney (in an admittedly poorly-written role) are the film's only serious faults; production-wise, it's on a par with Universal's offerings, and a melancholy score by Irving Gertz guarantees that it sounds like one.

In *Scarlet Street* #19, Beverly Garland recalled THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE. "They wanted a lot of men walking up and down the halls, in different degrees of turning into an alligator and it's very hard to do that if you have one alligator head and a very low budget. So they came up with this idea, they made these headpieces that were covered in white and used them on the men who were walking up and down the corridors. There were four or five men with these cov-





**LEFT:** Mrs. Hawthorne (Frieda Inescort) naps while her scaly son (Richard Crane), one of *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* (1959), asks his lovely wife (Beverly Garland) to dance. **RIGHT:** Don't fall down laughing—uh, running from the monstrous *CREATURE OF DESTRUCTION* (1968).

erings over their heads, and when I opened the door and walked in they all looked like they had white urinals on their heads! Well, I laughed so hard and long that we had to break for lunch for an hour! I could not go back to work!"

While it's arguable just how much the Gill Man Trilogy influenced the previous films, there's little doubt that it inspired *THE MONSTER OF PIEDRAS BLANCAS* (1958). The producer and makeup creator is Jack Kevan, who was most responsible for Blackie Lagoon's look; that means the suit is the most spectacular of all the copycats: a horned, demonic-looking crustacean creature that is inexplicably kept off-screen for too much of the film. The script is long on awkward, pointless dialogue and the acting descends to meet its level. Thanks to excellent, inventive photography *MONSTER* is good to look at, and the gore is surprisingly graphic for the period. Still, the film is undistinguished.

By 1961, the concept was ripe for satire and Roger Corman and writer Charles Griffith obliged with the agreeably daffy *CREATURE FROM THE HAUNTED SEA*. A fake sea beast turns out to be real and eliminates most of the cast, but the film is more a goof on *KEY LARGO* (1948) by way of *BEAT THE DEVIL* (1954)—there's even a Bogart impersonation tossed in—than a monster movie. The humor is on a *Mad* magazine level of silliness, and the monster is the

goofiest ever to appear in one of Corman's black-and-white fantasies; at least here the laughter is appropriate.

The surest sign that the concept had become convention came in the following year's *CASTLE OF THE MONSTERS* (1962). Even given that the film is a comic take on Universal's monster rallies, some tolerance for the Mexican hodgepodge approach is required; the mad doctor is also a hypnotist of Svengali-like abilities because . . . well, just because. A baggy suited but recognizable Gill Man is one of the castle's inhabitants. (The design of the monsters suggests the producers were blissfully unaware of copyright laws.) There's more footage devoted to the comic lead than to the monsters, who serve no discernible purpose other than to chase the hero through the castle. Mexican films often possess real assets—notably good sets, lighting, and photography—but their illogical plots and surreal combining of unlikely genres are an acquired taste.

That approach is encapsulated by the title cards, "Caston Santos and his horse 'Moonlight' in . . . *THE SWAMP OF THE LOST MONSTERS*," another 1962 Mexican entry which—and this is not damning with faint praise—is not as ludicrous as one might expect. In fact, the opening sequence is quite extraordinary—a masterful sequence of exquisitely realized compositions, in which a shoreside group

**LEFT:** In *THE SHE CREATURE* (1956), the female of the species was not only deadlier, but uglier. The suit was created by the legendary Paul Blaisdell. **RIGHT:** *THE MONSTER OF PIEDRAS BLANCAS* (1958) simply didn't measure up to the Gill Man's standards, even though he took a course on how to get ahead in horror movies.





awaits the arrival of a coffin in a low-slung boat that then carries two mourners to a cemetery. The film thereafter descends into twaddle, though it remains consistently arresting visually. The monster suit is not up to Universal's, but it's better than CASTLE's.

**THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH** (1963) *grosses*  
 strictly unskinned script, direction, and acting (the performers aren't even listed in the opening credits): the suit is intriguingly designed within its budget limitations. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the film is having the creatures formed by radioactive waste interacting with the skeletons of shipwrecked sailors. However scientifically dubious, **PARTY BEACH** is the first rip-off to make implicit the Creature Trilogy's ecological message. Another first is the inclusion of rock 'n' roll and a *suave* obsession with close-ups of gyrating female attributes during the dancing

Looking only slightly unlike a home movie that snuck into theaters, **THE BEACH GIRLS AND THE MONSTER** (1965), which similarly accessed AIP's Beach Party format for Hall, both before and behind the camera, helps not a whit, he apparently learned little of directing during his years as a leading man and delivers an inept performance. The script is unfocused and the camera rarely rises above the level of a high school drama society. The suit is right down there with the worst ever constructed for one of these films, suggesting that this marine creature has somehow incorporated vegetable matter into its physiology. Like **PARRY BEACH**, **BEACH GIRLS** features lots of frugging (with the inevitable closeups), but is otherwise even less worthy of one's time.

Surprisingly, the studio that logically should have added gill men to the Beach Party format—AIP—chose to graft them onto their Edgar Allan Poe series instead, in *WAR GODS OF THE DEEP* (1965). Based theoretically on the poem "The City in the Sea" (and released in Britain under that title), the results are more a Jules Verne variation of *THE LOST HORIZON* (1937): The gill men—the first use of the term outside of the Universal Trilogy—are the former inhabitants of a submerged city, somehow displaced in a water-breathing race. For the first of AIP's Poe series not directed by Corman, the studio turned to Jacques Tourneur, who does what he can but is ultimately defeated by a script that never tells.

Still, Tourneur finds many evocative moments and begins the film strongly with a series of ravishing night landscapes culminating with a corpse washed onto the beach, followed shortly after by a sequence in a dark study, the creature seen only in shadow save for a brief moment when its face is lit by the reflection from a thrown mirror shard. Tourneur even makes the budget-challenged sets of Vincent Price's watery realm look fairly opulent, but the script unravels and an interminable underwater pursuit finishes the film with a thud instead of a bang.



The suits look reasonably good in topside and are intriguingly designed, but the underwater versions are too obviously men wearing slip-on masks. They would reappear almost immediately in a movie AIP commissioned to fill out its package of TV releases, *SPACE PROBE TAURUS* (1966). Not only was the budget low for this puppy, but so, apparently, was the IQ of its scripter, who simply quilted together hoary clichés. After having humanity's first ever encounter with an alien being—which they promptly kill—the Taurus crew continues to a planet of water beings who wear the WAR GODS suits. In keeping with the recycling concept, the alien sports a mask borrowed from *WIZARD OF MARS* (1964).

Proving that the U.S. has no monopoly on bad genre movies, Japan tang in the following year with **TERROR BY N.E.A.T.H THE SEA** (1965), in which humans are transformed into silver-skinned gill-zombies in a Bond-inspired under-sea complex. You can tell the director responsible is mad, not just misguided, because he laughs unpleasantly. A lot. Technically, the film is sub-Toho, with models far too dinky to be convincing. And perhaps the less said about the cross-eyed, wrinkly beasties the better, they may not be the world's suits ever, but they're easily the most laughable

**DESTINATION INNER SPACE** (1967) features another undersea complex, this time threatened by a creature from an underwater saucer. (Any resemblance to 1951's **THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD** is no doubt completely intentional, as Gary Merrill does the old, "We must try to communicate with it," schtick.) The cast (which also features Scott Brady, Sherree North, and even Roy E. Goldstein in a bit role) does what it can with a perfunctory script and direction. The suit—created by Richard Cassiano—is pretty cool, with luminescent maroon eyes and colorful frills. Other assets include a terrific score by Paul Dunlap and excellent aerial and underwater photography.

Two other releases from 1966 are less competent. THE CURSE OF THE SWAMP CREATURE is one of several films Texas-based Larry Buchanan made for AIP's JV package. CURSE resembles a Sam Katzman Monogram film, though it's less technically adept. One can imagine Bela Lugosi transplanting gills onto human subjects for completely opaque reasons, deciding the rejects to a swimming pool of stock footage alligators—and one is tempted to borrow the adjective normally reserved for Bela to comment on "poor" John Agar's presence in this witless mess. The atrocious creature consists of absurd ping-pong ball eyes and a modified bald cap studded with green marbles.

The jellyfish-man in **STING OF DEATH** is truly farcical—a wet suit and swim fins very obviously the main



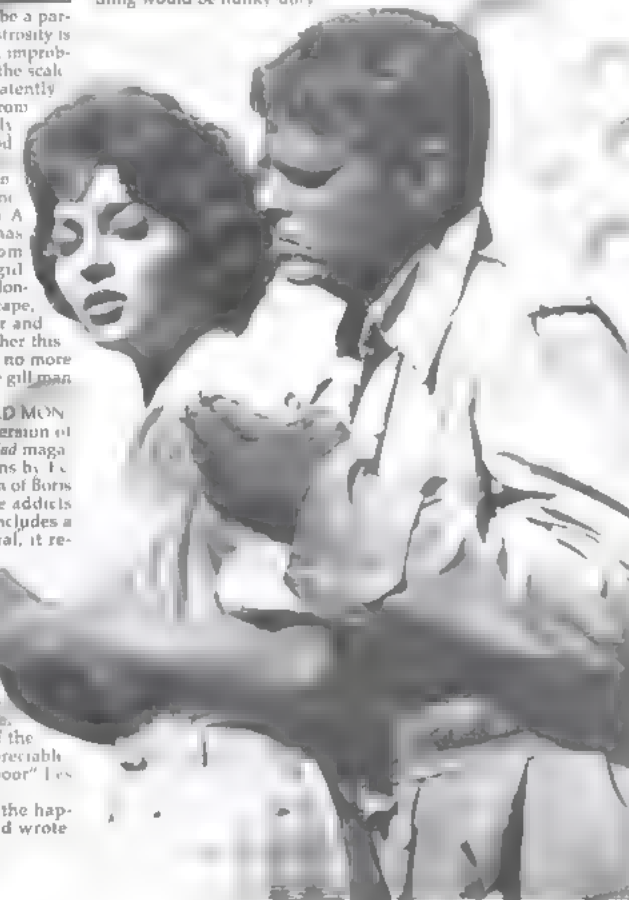
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More Mexican genre-blending is on hand in 1967's *THE BAT WOMAN*, which mixes a Bob Kane rip-off and pro wrestling into the Creature formula. A nutty scientist, with an assistant named Igor, has been extracting pituitary gland extracts from these wrestlers to transmute a goldfish into a girl man. He is opposed by The Bat Woman (Maura Monti), a wealthy socialite who dons a black bikini, cape, and bat eared mask to become a female wrestler and crimefighter. What isn't completely clear is whether this film is meant to be taken seriously, it's certainly no more preposterous than a great many Mexi-horror. The girl man suit is decent however.

In 1968, Rankin/Bass Productions crafted *MAD MONSTER PARTY?*, which resembles a Puppetoon version of *THE CASTLE OF THE MONSTERS*. With a script by *Mad* magazine cocreator Harvey Kurtzman, character designs by *The Comics* vet Jack Davis, and the vocal participation of Boris Karloff, the film promises more interest to genre addicts than it delivers. The monster rally participants includes a purple fishman with arms and legs and, as usual, it remains peripheral to the action.

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In an article in *Scarlet Street* #12, covering the haphazard making of this landmark film, Kincaid wrote



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Buchanan said that my hair was to be darkened to a dark brown to de-emphasize my youth. I was supposed to be a parapsychologist, and Buchanan felt that my teenybopper appeal should be minimized at every opportunity. The first day of shooting, I wandered onto the set with dark green hair and a dead-end hangover. The constant jet traffic from a neighboring Air Force base was ruining nine out of 10 takes. I figured that with my green hair nobody would notice a few jets. A hasty trip to the aforementioned Air Base secured a captain's uniform for me. I became Captain Ted Deil, a parapsychologist in the Air Force. Now the roaring jets would be left on the soundtrack and, with a few inserts of planes hurtling across the grainy 16mm sky, everything would be hunky dory.





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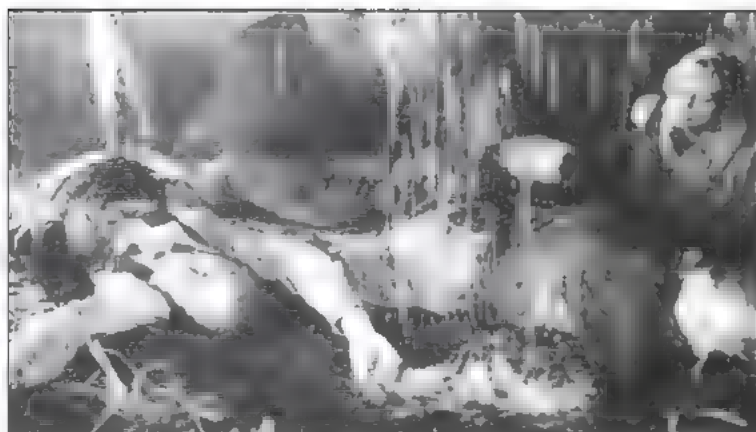
In an article in *Scarlet Street* #12, covering the haphazard making of this landmark film, Kincaid wrote:

PAGE 40 LEFT: *THE MONSTER SQUAD* (1987) included a Gill Man (Tom Woodruff Jr.) along with Dracula (Duncan Regehr), Frankenstein's Monster (Tom Noonan), The Mummy (Michael Reid MacKay), and The Wolf Man (Carl Thibault). PAGE 40 RIGHT: *THE PHANTOM FROM 10,000 LEAGUES* played the bottom of the bill with *DAY THE WORLD ENDED* (both 1956). LEFT: *THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH* (1964) was that it made AIP's Beach Party pix look like *CITIZEN KANE* in comparison. BELOW: The heartbreak of psoriasis comes between lovers Beverly Garland and Richard Crane in *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE*.

"Buchanan said that my hair was to be darkened to a dark brown to de-emphasize my youth. I was supposed to be a parapsychologist, and Buchanan felt that my teenybopper appeal should be minimized at every opportunity. The first day of shooting, I wandered onto the set with dark green hair and a deadly hangover. The constant jet traffic from a neighboring Air Force base was ruining nine out of 10 takes. I figured that with my green hair nobody would notice a few jets. A hasty trip to the aforementioned air base yielded a captain's uniform for me. I became Captain Ted Dell, a parapsychologist in the Air Force. Now the roaring jets would be left on the soundtrack and, with a few inserts of planes hurtling across the grainy 16mm sky, every thing would be hunky dory."







LEFT: One of the silvery WAR GODS OF THE DEEP (1965) poses in his best bib and seaweed for the publicity camera. CENTER: Yvette Vickers (right) found out the hard way that life sucks when she became one of the victims of the ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES (1959). RIGHT: Besides human-sized gill creatures, the depths have brought forth such sizable atrocities as the giant flying turtle, Camera (pictured here in 1971's CAMERA VERSUS JIGER). BOTTOM LEFT: The cover of *Scarlet Street* #10 sported THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE.

Another feature directly connected to Universal is OCTAMAN (1971), written and directed by Harry Essex, who contributed to the original CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON script and here provides a near duplicate. New wrinkles include atomic pollution—already commonplace when the first Creature film came out—and a psychic link between the monster and Pier Angeli's character, an idea that remains unexplored. OCTAMAN is on a par with Larry Buchanan's work. The cast (which also includes Kerwin Matthews and Jeff Morrow) cannot overcome the tepid direction or production deficiencies that include a dismally underfunded suit created by Rick Baker on his first professional assignment.

Still, OCTAMAN is a classic compared to the wretched BLOOD WATERS OF DR. Z (aka ZAAT), released briefly to theaters in 1972 and again in 1975. Tedium sets in with unbelievable rapidity. Director Don Barton seems to think it's fascinating to observe a disheveled nebbish shuffle slowly through an enormous warehouse, reading the occasional dial and flapping the occasional switch before clumsily lowering himself into a vat of Zaat and emerging in a god-awful costume resembling ambulatory mold cunningly trimmed with green fun-fur. (Unbelievably, it took three people to concoct this mess!) The creature then wanders a lake-bottom squirting the marine life with Zaat to no appreciable effect and kills off former scientific colleagues as in some George Zucco PRC vehicle.

HUMANOID FROM THE DEEP (1980) tosses in some JAWS (1975) influences, as mutated salmon assault a sea-

side town. The Corman-produced film tries to balance graphic unpleasantness with edgy humor, but only fitfully manages it. Director Barbara Peeters is no Joe Dante or Stuart Gordon. She does, however, intriguingly blur the line between "us" and "them" during the climactic confrontation, when both species seem equally brutal. The sublime eroticism of CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON's underwater ballet is sup-

planted by young women being stripped and raped in muddy sand—scenes that are as unrelentingly grotesque as the gory deaths.

Since JAWS involves an actual shark, it doesn't properly belong in this survey, but it's worth noting that Steven Spielberg admits borrowing inspirations for it from Jack Arnold's Creature films. JAWS 3-D (1983) goes one better by revamping a screenplay intended for a proposed CREATURE remake. The origin is more interesting than the completed project, which falls into the bloody body-count mentality of that period.

Surprisingly in this graphic period, several tributes to the Old School emerged and Fred Dekker's THE MONSTER SQUAD (1987) is easily the niftiest. The unlikely heroes are a prepubescent group of horror fans who alone possess the knowledge to defeat an invasion led by Count Dracula. Among the assembled creeps is a gill man who looks impressive but, as in most of these monster rallies, has little to do. Pity Universal wasn't the home of this valentine to their classics (and stuffed with sly references to them); the use of their copyrighted makeups would have provided the perfect finishing touch.

Things have been quiet in regards to gill men in recent years, though another proposed remake has been announced. The concept itself is in transformation. A 2001 version of THE SHE CREATURE dropped entirely the original story in favor of something closer to NIGHT TIDE (1963). Though this story of a man-eating mermaid is well very done, one questions the point of doing a remake that retains only the title. Another malevolent mermaid figures in Stuart Gordon's intense DAGON (2002), where a townful of hybrids has resulted from mating with an ancient marine race. H. P. Lovecraft's stories predate the Creature Trilogy by several decades, but any influence they may have had can only be speculated.

All these tales—as well as those properly belonging to another subgenre, the giant sea monster films—likely spring from a primal fear of the unknown that has generated stories of sea serpents and sirens since early times. (The sea is the largest, still relatively unexplored, area on our planet.) Combined with the mid-1800s discovery of dinosaurs and theories of missing links, they transformed into fiction of extant dinosaurs and gill men. THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS (1953) may have been CREATURE's chief inspiration, though it was the Japanese who would embrace the leviathan tale, building long-lived series around such characters as Godzilla and Gamera. But these beasts and giant behemoths are outside the parameters of this overview; their story is, as the poet put it, another one for another time.



## RICOU BROWNING

*Continued from page 33*

**RB:** Oh, yes! Newt Perry's daughter sent me copies of all the films they had done. I enjoy watching them! One time, Newt was doing an underwater fashion show at Marine Land Studios, and asked if I'd like to work on it with him. I said, "Sure." We had girls fashioning bathing suits and clothing underwater in the tank. While I was there, I saw the dolphin show. They had trained dolphins jumping out of the water and taking fish out of your hand, jumping through hoops. I was very impressed. Well, then, dissolve to some years later—I was working at Silver Springs as a public relations person. I got an idea to go to the Amazon River to catch a freshwater dolphin, because no one had ever seen one. It was a publicity stunt for the Springs, to bring the dolphins back and put them in a show. Anyway, we flew to the Amazon and stayed there about eight weeks on the river, and we finally got five freshwater dolphins. We flew them to Silver Springs and put them in a pen area and started feeding and taming them. Nothing ever happened as far as putting a show on, but I began to swim and play with them and I really enjoyed it. Shortly after, I went home and my children were watching *LASSIE* on TV. It struck me—why not have a show about a boy and a dolphin? My brother-in-law, Jack Cowden, worked as a radio announcer. I said, "Jack, I've got this idea about doing something with a boy and a dolphin—like the Greek or Roman legend of a boy riding a dolphin. I'd like to do a book. You can write. I can write a bit, so let's do it." We spent a year, half a year fiddling with it. Finally, I called Hugh Downs. I became friends with him because he had a pet dolphin years back—and he set me up with a couple of publishers. So I flew to New York on my last hundred bucks, trying to peddle the book, and finally I got one

company interested. I came home and waited, but I didn't hear anything. In the meantime, I'd been doing *SEA HUNT* with Ivan Tors. Again, I was a stuntman and wound up directing the underwater portions of the series. I got a bright idea to ask Ivan if he'd consider this dolphin story as a movie. Then, if he said he would, I'd call the book company and tell them I had a Hollywood producer considering the book for a movie. I figured it might push them to publish the book. Anyway, I called Ivan and he said he'd do it, but to send him a copy. I called the book company and never heard a word back from them, but I got a call from Ivan! He said, "Guess what? Let's make a movie." He got with MGM and got the monies and we made *FLIPPER* as a feature in 1963. Then we made a second feature in 1964, and then we did four years of television shows.

**SS:** In the 1996 remake of *FLIPPER*, you received a writing credit.

**RB:** They didn't even call me. I had to get an attorney to hit them up for money. We got a good amount of money out of it, but we didn't initially even get a hello! That's the film business. If you do a film in Hollywood, you walk out of the studio and come back the next day and they won't even let you on the lot.

**SS:** *FLIPPER* has had a lasting appeal.

**RB:** *FLIPPER* succeeded because it was a first. The first time you do something it's usually the best, whatever it is. No one had ever done a film with a dolphin. No one had ever seen a dolphin with someone in the water. In the shows at the marine lands all over the United States, at least—there was no one in the water with the dolphin. No one knew that this animal could be so lovable.

**SS:** Taking that successful formula of a lovable water animal, you also created *SALTY* in 1974, featuring a sea lion instead of a dolphin.

**RB:** We did that TV series with a Canadian company. We shot a year of shows

and it was shown up there. First we made a movie, a feature, and then we did a year of television. I was disappointed that it didn't go longer. I was dealing with a bunch of crooks—not the Canadians, but the people with the money. One guy took me for quite a bit of money. We finally, through our attorney, got the rights back, so we could do it again if we had the chance.

**SS:** You had a sea lion as a pet for a time.

**RB:** That was Salty. I bought her at four months old and raised her in my home for three years, trained her, and then we did the script and made the film. I loved it. The kids loved it. A sea lion is similar to having a dog as a pet, especially when they're very young. They think you're their mother. They follow you everywhere. I used to have a Mustang and when I'd drive, she'd sit on my lap in front of the steering wheel. People would pull up beside me and see this sea lion sitting in my lap, sucking on a pacifier. (Laughs) We had a lot of fun with her. She was a super animal. She just died, by the way, some months ago. She had cancer. She was 27 years old.

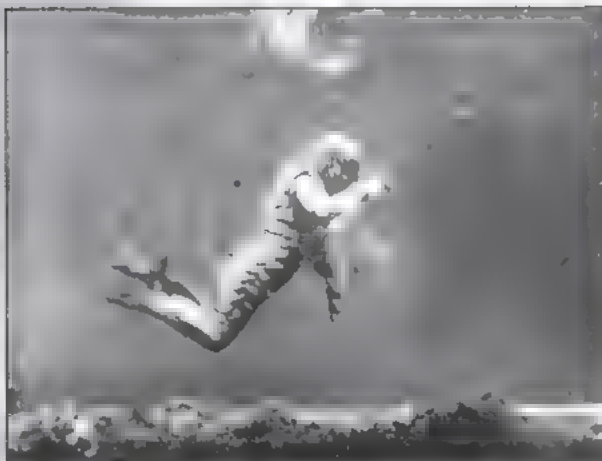
**SS:** A lot of your movies and projects have had an ecological bent to them.

**RB:** I was born in Florida, in a little town called Jensen. My mother ran a concession at Jensen Beach, and we used to swim in the ocean all the time as kids. Then we moved to Tallahassee and I became a lifeguard at Wakulla Springs. This was when I was in school. I worked with Newt Perry. Later, we went to Weekee Wachee Springs and built an underwater theater and started putting on underwater shows. I did that for a lot of years. Everything I did was either in or around the water. I'd consider myself an environmentalist in the sense that I don't appreciate people throwing trash in the ocean. We only have one world and we better take care of it. When I was a young man, I used to hunt—dove hunt and duck hunt.

**LEFT:** A real hands-on filmmaker, Ricou Browning paints a sign for Sandy Ricks, played by Luke Halpin in two *FLIPPER* theatrical features and the popular 1964 TV series. **RIGHT:** Sandy and his kid brother, Bud (Tommy Norden), have a heart-to-heart with their favorite dolphin.







**LEFT:** Head's up as Jack Kevan, primarily responsible for creating the Gill Man suit for *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* and its sequels (though official credit went to Bud Westmore, the head of Universal's makeup department), helps Ricou Browning gel in character. **RIGHT:** No Gill Man himself, Browning pauses for a refreshing drink of fresh air between scenes.

Now, I couldn't even stand to point a gun at them. I guess, when you grow older, you learn to love what we've got, but when I was young I thought hunting was fun. You change.

**SS:** How did your career evolve from a 21-year-old kid doing water shows to working so heavily in movie stunt work?

**RB:** Everything started for me underwater. I was working at Silver Springs in Florida and Ivan Tors, who I didn't know, sent a production manager to find a place to film underwater for *SEA HUNT*. They saw the Springs and wanted to shoot there. Ivan came down, liked the location, and they started shooting. They

hired me to double underwater in a fight sequence with Lloyd Bridges' double, Courtney Brown. So I did the fight sequence, and then every time they had a part for a bad guy underwater, they'd hire me. We'd worked a year at Silver Springs, then Ivan wanted to go to the Bahamas to film the next year of *SEA HUNT*. He asked me if I'd be interested in going over to scout locations, so I did. I spent two weeks swimming and gorging around the island. I wrote him a report and he liked it. He said, "Would you like to start directing underwater? I'm going to hire you as our underwater director. If you cut it, you got it." The next year we went to the Bahamas and I directed the underwater sequences. Then, I started doing second unit topside on some other shows. Gradually, I started doing both underwater and topside.

**SS:** You worked on many projects with Ivan Tors, including *DARING GAMES* in 1968, which featured your *CREATURE* costar Richard Carlson.

**RB:** I didn't even see him during filming! (Laughs) People think we sat down, had lunch, and talked about the story or something. I didn't even see him! I just did my part of the show.

**SS:** Your body of work in the sixties was quite prolific. You worked on the second unit of *LADY IN CEMENT* in 1966 and *HELLO DOWN THERE* in 1968, directed by none other than Jack Arnold.

**RB:** I never met Frank Sinatra on *LADY IN CEMENT*. Jack Arnold was a super guy, he really was. I stayed in contact with Jack through the years—but nothing socially, just as friends. He was a very nice guy, very easy to work with.

**SS:** *HELLO DOWN THERE* featured quite a cast, including Jim Backus, Merv Griffin, Janet Leigh, Tony Randall, Roddy McDowall, and a young Richard Dreyfuss.

**RB:** Richard Dreyfuss wasn't even well known, then. He played a small part in the band with the other kids. I liked Tony. When we were shooting, we had scenes where they look out porpoises and see fish and sharks and things—I helped them with that, but that's really the only thing I had to do with it.

**SS:** Your work encompasses writing, second unit directing, directing, stunt coordination—do you wish you could have concentrated on just one area?

**RB:** Right now, I'm still writing and doing shows. For two years, I had the option on a script that I was going to direct but the money didn't come through. I wanted to get into more topside directing, but I haven't had that opportunity. When you're a second unit director, they think of you as just a second unit director. The only time you're going to get out of that is something you do on your own, like *SALTY*. I directed that. It was as good as *FLIPPER* was as a children's show, but it wasn't as successful financially.

**SS:** If you could bring back one of your old projects, would you choose *SALTY*?

**RB:** No, I'd like to go with new projects. *SALTY* wouldn't be a bad one to do over, because it didn't get a lot of exposure. It might still make a nice television show.

**SS:** You did the second unit work on *HOT STUFF* in 1979, which was directed by comedian Dom DeLuise.

**RB:** He's a character! (Laughs) He left a message on my answering machine when the film was over. He said, "Ricou? I want to thank you for all your help, but if any body asks if you helped me I'll say no!" Hollywood hates giving credit, but at least he was honest.

**NEXT: James Bond Returns!**

#### BEN CHAPMAN

Continued from page 33

**BC:** Well, Ricou did everything underwater. What I did on land had nothing to do with Ricou and what he did underwater, I had nothing to do with him. I'll say one thing, though—he was one hell of a swimmer. Look at the scene where he swims beneath Ginger Stanley on his back—I call it a water ballet. It's beautiful.

**SS:** Tell us about appearing with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello on *THE COLGATE COMEDY HOUR*. It happened on February 21, 1954, shortly before the release of the movie.

**BC:** Oh, God, let me tell you! It was a grueling experience! It was a 15-minute skit, with the Gill Man and Frankenstein. Frankenstein was played by a famous actor by the name of Glenn Strange, who also portrayed him in films. He was actually the first person they asked to portray the Gill Man. He said no. He was a cowboy—water and him don't mix! (Laughs) Anyway, when we got to the studio for *THE COLGATE COMEDY HOUR*, they got us suited up and we sat in our rooms waiting and waiting and waiting. We kept saying, "When are we going on?" They'd say, "Oh, Mr. Costello's not ready yet." Finally, they put us on the set. They put Glenn in a coffin; he had to lie in that thing for I don't know how long! I had to stand in a closet. Our actual appearances were—well, you blink an eye and we're gone.

**SS:** Was that your last time as the Creature?

**BC:** Yes. Since then, I hung up my suit.

**SS:** Didn't they have you make any promotional appearances for the film?

**BC:** No, Mickey Patrick, who worked on the suit, did all that. Why? I don't know, but that's beside the point. The studio tells you what to do. It's their picture.

**SS:** What do you credit for *CREATURE*'s continuing popularity?

**BC:** People like to be scared, if it's done properly—that's why they're classic horror movies. Today, they're more geared to blood and guts. Movies in my day—you'd walk down the street, you'd think, "Gee, I've got a couple of hours, I think I'll go to a movie." You'd go to the movie, you'd come out, feel great, feel refreshed. Today, you go to the movie, you come out—you feel worse! Movies were meant to be pretend. Today, they make them too life-like; it's not pretend anymore. A guy goes in with a problem, he comes out with a bigger problem! (Laughs)

**SS:** Contributing to *CREATURE*'s success was the classic background score.

**BC:** Now, somebody very famous borrowed that concept. Today it's an all-time classic movie—*JAWS*. John Williams admits it. He took it from *CREATURE*. You don't know where *Jaws* is, but when you hear the music—uh, oh! For *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, Joseph Gershenson was the director of music, but he didn't write the music. There was a staff writer who helped write the music—Henry Mancini.

**SS:** Yes, along with Hans J. Seltzer and Herman Stein.

**BC:** Right! Another bit of trivia—When *CREATURE* came out, Universal Studios was on the verge of bankruptcy. *CREA-*

*TURE* saved the studio from going under. *FRANKENSTEIN* was supposed to have done the same thing.

**SS:** After shooting was over, did you feel you'd done justice to the role?

**BC:** Well, I never saw the film until it showed in the theaters. I never went to rushes or dailies. There was a guy under contract named Race Gentry, and we went to the Picwood Theatre on Westwood and Pico in West Los Angeles. We stood in line waiting to go in, and he said, "C'mon, Benny, get up there! You're the star! Tell the manager!" And I said, "Hey, shut up! We'll go in like everybody else." So I sat there with the people, with my popcorn, hot dogs—just like everybody else. People were screaming and ducking the 3-D effects. We never had a bad review.

**SS:** There's been talk of a remake for a number of years. Would you like to see the movie remade using today's special effects?

**BC:** No! And I'll tell you why—there's too much high tech. They'd take the Creature and ruin him. I mean, if they want to remake *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* with Spielberg—I'd love it. But I wouldn't trust anybody else.

**SS:** Have you met any famous Creature fans?

**BC:** Do you remember *THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH* with Marilyn Monroe? She goes to a movie with Tom Ewell, and it's *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. As they walk out of the theater, the camera picks up this marquee in the background with huge letters with the movie title and this huge 30-foot standee of me as the Creature holding Julie. Well, when I saw it in 1955, I almost fell off my chair. That was in the studio days, and *SEVEN YEAR ITCH* was 20th Century Fox. They used a Universal picture! They could have used any movie from their own archives.

Anyway, Peter Lawford was a friend of mine. He was one of the first people I met when I moved to Southern California. He was a young, struggling contractee from MGM, so we kept our friendship going. One night, I was at his house—he lived in Santa Monica, on the beach—and Marilyn was there. He said, "Marilyn, I'd like you to meet my friend, Ben Chapman." She said, "Oh, how do you do?" She was very sweet. I thought, "How am I going to bring this up? That I was the Creature?"

So I said, "You know, Miss Monroe, I really like your work. *THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH*—I really enjoyed it, especially the scene where you come out of the theater." She thought I meant the famous scene where her dress blows up in the air. I said, "No, no—when you come out of the theater. What was that movie's name?" She said, "Oh, you mean *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*?"

I said, "That's right. I loved it when you were walking toward the camera and they panned up to the huge Gill Man. Have you ever really seen *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*?" She said, "Oh, yes, I've seen it. I enjoyed it very much." I said, "Well, I have to tell you—I played the Gill Man." She didn't believe it. I said, "Peter, would you explain to Marilyn." He did, and she started

gushing all about how much she liked *CREATURE*. Here's Marilyn Monroe gushing at me when I should have been gushing at her! (Laughs)

**SS:** The rest of the classic monster actors are all gone. Karloff, for instance.

**BC:** A great man! I met Boris Karloff. I met Lon Chaney Jr. and Bela Lugosi. I'll tell you one thing—Boris Karloff was, without a doubt, one of the classiest guys you could ever meet. He was extremely handsome. He would come in wearing a tuxedo suit. Away from makeup, when he got dressed up and he had that beautiful voice and that beautiful accent—he was a very, very charming man. To me, he was handsome. He wasn't Rock Hudson, but with the white hair, oh, he was very handsome. It was a privilege to meet him. I met him one day on the lot, he happened to be there. Chaney and Lugosi—they were all from Universal, so I ran into them all. Chaney was Chaney—and I won't elaborate.

**SS:** Looking back, don't you wish your name was on the movie?

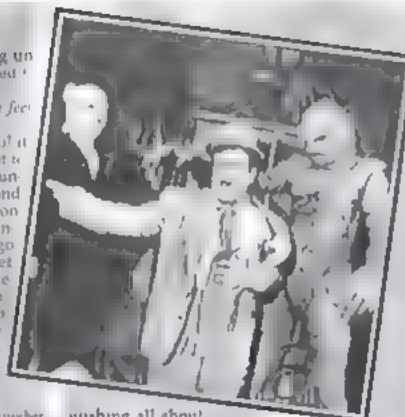
**BC:** Well, it's unfair to say yes, because I have gotten recognition. When you're young and starting out, you want to build as many film credits as you can. But like I said, I was primarily an entertainer. I've never said that I was an actor. I became an actor, and was lucky enough to get that role.

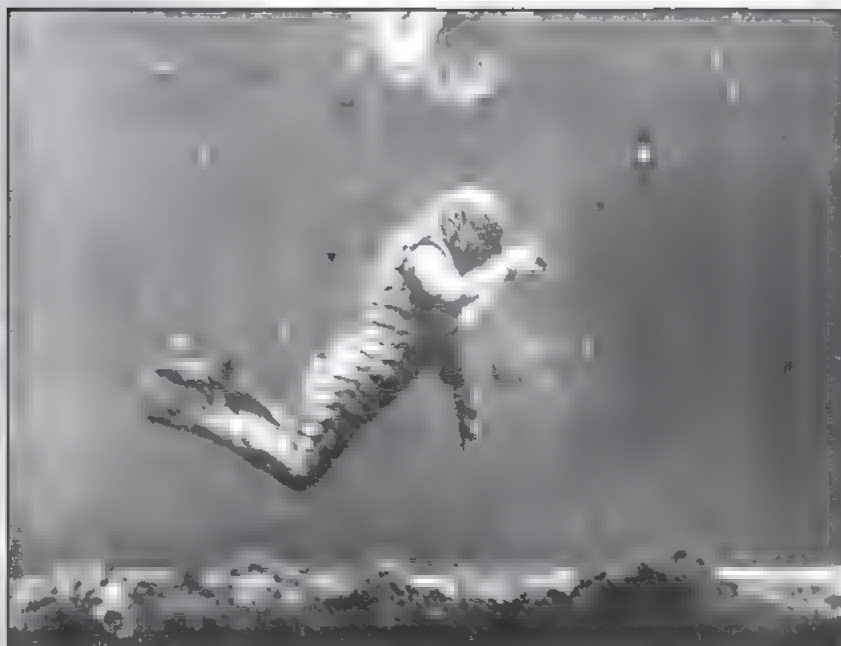
**SS:** What do you think of the two sequels?

**BC:** In *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*, that was Tom Hennessey as the Gill Man, and in *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US*, it was Don McGowan. *REVENGE*, I enjoyed. I cried when I saw *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US*, because it didn't make a sense to me. Maybe I'm biased, because there are people who love it. My opinion is, "We created this beautiful guy in *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, and he just didn't look right in *WALKS AMONG US*. He was disfigured. His whole body, his face—it didn't look like the original Gill Man."

**SS:** He resembled the Frankenstein Monster.

**BC:** That's what broke my heart. In *REVENGE*, they kept him more or less the same. Tom's costume was different, though. If you put it side by side with mine, the differences are obvious.





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## BEN CHAPMAN

Continued from page 33

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SS: Was that your last time as the Creature?

BC: Yes. Since then, I hung up my suit.

SS: Didn't they have you make any promotional appearances for the film?

BC: No, Millicent Patrick, who worked on the suit, did all that. Why? I don't know, but that's beside the point. The studio tells you what to do. It's their picture.

SS: What do you credit for CREATURE's continuing popularity?

BC: People like to be scared, if it's done properly—that's why they're classic horror movies. Today, they're more geared to blood and guts. Movies in my day—you'd walk down the street, you'd think, "Gee, I've got a couple of hours. I think I'll go to a movie." You'd go to the movie, you'd come out, feel great, feel refreshed. Today, you go to the movie, you come out—you feel worse! Movies were meant to be pretend. Today, they make them too life-like, it's not pretend anymore. A guy goes in with a problem, he comes out with a bigger problem! (Laughs)

SS: Contributing to CREATURE's success was the classic background score.

BC: Now, somebody very famous borrowed that concept. Today it's an all-time classic movie—JAWS. John Williams admits it. He took it from CREATURE. You don't know where Jaws is, but when you hear the music—uh, oh. For CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, Joseph Gershenson was the director of music, but he didn't write the music. There was a staff writer who helped write the music—Henry Mancini.

SS: Yes, along with Hans J. Salter and Herman Stein.

BC: Right! Another bit of trivia—When CREATURE came out, Universal Studios was on the verge of bankruptcy. CREA-

TURE saved the studio from going under. FRANKENSTEIN was supposed to have done the same thing.

SS: After shooting was over, did you feel you'd done justice to the role?

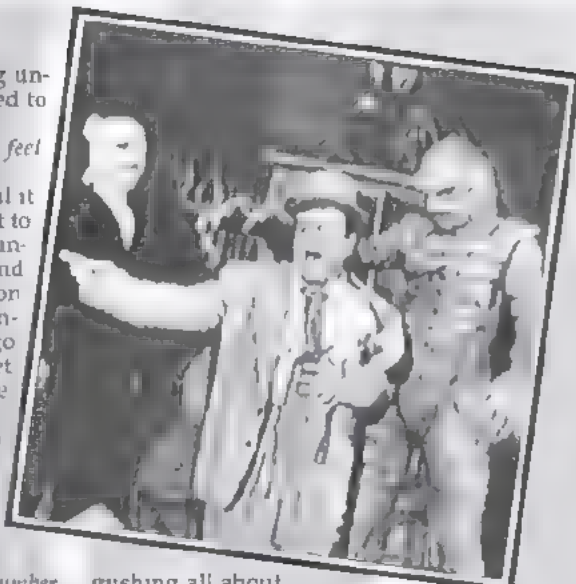
BC: Well, I never saw the film until it showed in the theaters. I never went to rushes or dailies. There was a guy under contract named Race Gentry, and we went to the Picwood Theatre on Westwood and Pico in West Los Angeles. We stood in line waiting to go in, and he said, "C'mon, Benny, get up there! You're the star! Tell the manager!" And I said, "Hey, shut up. We'll go in like everybody else." So I sat there with the people, with my popcorn, hot dogs—just like everybody else. People were screaming and ducking the 3-D effects. We never had a bad review.

SS: There's been talk of a remake for a number of years. Would you like to see the movie remade using today's special effects?

BC: No. And I'll tell you why—there's too much high tech. They'd take the Creature and ruin him. I mean, if they want to remake CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON with Spielberg—I'd love it. But I wouldn't trust anybody else.

SS: Have you met any famous Creature fans?

BC: Do you remember THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH, with Marilyn Monroe? She goes to a movie with Tom Ewell, and it's CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. As they walk out of the theater, the camera picks up this marquee in the background with huge letters with the movie title, and this huge 30-foot standee of me as the Creature holding Julie. Well, when I saw it in 1955, I almost fell off my chair! That was in the studio days, and SEVEN YEAR ITCH was 20th Century Fox. They used a Universal picture! They could have used any movie from their own archives. Anyway, Peter Lawford was a friend of mine. He was one of the first people I met when I moved to Southern California. He was a young, struggling contractee from MGM, so we kept our friendship going. One night, I was at his house—he lived in Santa Monica, on the beach—and Marilyn was there. He said, "Marilyn, I'd like you to meet my friend, Ben Chapman." She said, "Oh, how do you do?" She was very sweet. I thought, "How am I going to bring this up, that I was the Creature?" So I said, "You know, Miss Monroe, I really like your work. THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH—I really enjoyed it, especially the scene where you come out of the theater." She thought I meant the famous scene where her dress blows up in the air. I said, "No, no—when you come out of the theater. What was that movie's name?" She said, "Oh, you mean CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON?" I said, "That's right. I loved it when you were walking toward the camera and they panned up to the huge Gill Man. Have you ever really seen CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON?" She said, "Oh, yes, I've seen it. I enjoyed it very much." I said, "Well, I have to tell you—I played the Gill Man." She didn't believe it. I said, "Peter, would you explain to Marilyn." He did, and she started



gushing all about

how much she liked CREATURE.

Here's Marilyn Monroe gushing at me when I should have been gushing at her. (Laughs)

SS: The rest of the classic monster actors are all gone. Karloff, for instance.

BC: A great man! I met Boris Karloff. I met Lon Chaney Jr. and Bela Lugosi. I'll tell you one thing—Boris Karloff was, without a doubt, one of the classiest guys you could ever meet. He was extremely handsome. He would come in wearing a tweed suit. Away from makeup, when he got dressed up and he had that beautiful voice and that beautiful accent—he was a very, very charming man. To me, he was handsome. He wasn't Rock Hudson, but with the white hair—oh, he was very handsome. It was a privilege to meet him. I met him one day on the lot; he happened to be there. Chaney and Lugosi—they were all from Universal, so I ran into them all. Chaney was Chaney—and I won't elaborate.

SS: Looking back, don't you wish your name was on the movie?

BC: Well, it's unfair to say yes, because I have gotten recognition. When you're young and starting out, you want to build as many film credits as you can. But like I said, I was primarily an entertainer. I've never said that I was an actor. I became an actor, and was lucky enough to get that role.

SS: What do you think of the two sequels?

BC: In REVENGE OF THE CREATURE, that was Tom Hennessey as the Gill Man, and in THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US, it was Don McGowan. REVENGE, I enjoyed. I cried when I saw THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US, because it didn't make any sense to me. Maybe I'm biased, because there are people who love it. My opinion is, "We created this beautiful guy in CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, and he just didn't look right in WALKS AMONG US. He was disfigured. His whole body, his face—it didn't look like the original Gill Man."

SS: He resembled the Frankenstein Monster.

BC: That's what broke my heart. In REVENGE, they kept him more or less the same. Tom's costume was different though. If you put it side by side with mine, the differences are obvious.



**PAGE 45:** Ben Chapman made his second and last appearance as the Creature on an episode of *THE COLGATE COMEDY HOUR* starring Bud Abbott and Lou Costello. **LEFT:** Julie Adams smiles as Chapman hams it up between takes on *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*. **CENTER:** A Gill Man's work is never done. **RIGHT:** Chapman beamed when he was recently reunited with the Creature headpiece, made from the original mold by Courtlandt Hull, creator of the *Witches' Dungeon* Classic Movie Museum in Bristol, Connecticut.

**SS:** Did you see *REVENGE* when it opened?  
**BC:** Oh, sure. Tom Hennesy is a good friend. He came to my house when he got the part. He said, "Hey, Benny! Guess what—I'm going to do *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*!" So I said, "Hey, great!" I'm asked why I didn't do any of the sequels. Well, I wasn't under contract anymore, and they never called me. I enjoyed *REVENGE*, but both of the sequels involved salt water. The Gill Man was a freshwater person! He's from a lagoon! You have to excuse certain things, of course.

**SS:** Watching *REVENGE*, did you wish it was you in the costume?

**BC:** I wish they hadn't done a sequel. At the end of the *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, I stagger into the water, and you see the Creature slowly sink.

**SS:** Was that you or Ricou in that final shot?

**BC:** I heard that they put a dummy in a suit, but I really don't know. It could have been Ricou.

**SS:** After *CREATURE*, you left show business for other fields of work.

**BC:** I was never an actor. There are actors who'll eat pork and beans; they'd starve to become a star. It never affected me that way. After *CREATURE*, I played the original police lieutenant in *HAWAIIAN EYE*. I also did about a dozen *ADVENTURES IN PARADISE*. I also played a young chieftain in *JUNGLE JIM AND THE MOON MEN*. I got killed in the very beginning, (thank God!) (Laughs) I also did a lot of bartending through the fifties, at a place called The Cottage, up in Malibu. In 1970, I called it quits and moved back to Tahiti. After that, I moved to Hawaii and worked in the tour business. I'm still there.

**SS:** You played a woman on an episode of *THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN*.

**BC:** It was through a friend of mine. His wife was the casting director in Honolulu. Lee Majors is a great, gay, nice man. I met him when he was married to Farrah Fawcett.

**SS:** There was another Ben Chapman at Universal, wasn't there?

**BC:** He was a production man. I knew Ben Chapman. In fact, when I first went to Universal, I was visiting another set and I got to talking with some of the film crew. "Well, what's your name, kid?" "Ben Chapman." "I know your dad! I did a picture with him." "Whoa, whoa—what are you talking about? My dad was a chief engineer in the merchant marines." I came to find out there was a Ben Chapman in production, and people thought I was his son. (Laughs) One day, I passed this door and it said "Ben Chapman" on it. I thought, "Ah, ha! I've found him!" So I walked in and asked the secretary, "Is Ben Chapman in? I want to see him right now. I'm Ben Chapman. I'm his son, his long-lost son!" She walked into his office, and three minutes later Ben Chapman walked out. I said, "Dad!" He said, "Son!" So we had a big laugh. Sometimes our bios got mixed up. They have me working on all kinds of things that I didn't do.

**SS:** *DONOVAN'S BRAIN, THE GIANT GILA MONSTER, KILLER SHREWS*

**BC:** Actually, the ironic thing is, if you look at the early *FLIPPERS*, you'll see production manager "Ben Chapman." Ricou Browning created *FLIPPER*, so people think, "Wow! They became big friends after that and he hired him on." Not so.

**SS:** Do you receive any sort of fee for Gill Man memorabilia?

**BC:** No, I do not. It belongs to Universal. It doesn't really bother me, although—I'm not going to be piggy about it, but they've made a lot of money off this movie and the least they could do is share it! I'm being very honest. I feel that doing conventions keeps the Gill Man in front of the public, making him accessible to the fans. They would not be selling all of those toys if he were not being exposed. If the studio wants to be nice, they can send me a check! (Laughs)

**SS:** Tell us about your family, Ben.

**BC:** The love of my life is a woman named Merrilee Kazarian. We've been together, now, almost 20 years. I was married before. From my marriage, I have a son, Ben, and a stepson, Grant. Sweetest guy in the world. I also have a daughter, Elsie Marie. I'm proud of my children.

**SS:** What is life like back in Hawaii?

**BC:** Well, you know, it's very boring. I wake up in the morning and look out the window; the sky is blue with white clouds. I open the window; there's some nice trade winds. I walk a block and there's the beach. You people here have all the excitement—when you get bored on Saturday night, you go to McDonald's, get a bag of sandwiches, sit on the corner, and watch drive-by shootings.

**SS:** When did you start to meet your fans?

**BC:** The first show I did was in 1994, the *Chiller* show in New Jersey. I live in Hawaii and I wear T-shirts and shorts, so I showed up that way. Everybody else was dressed up. Since then, that's become my trademark. I'm the most comfortable guy at these shows. The other guys wear neckties and shirts—they're miserable. Me, I'm laid back.

**SS:** Anything you want to tell your fans?

**BC:** I'd just like to say again to all the faithful fans—Gillies, I call them—thank you very much for keeping the Gill Man alive all these years. Also, I'd like to encourage fans to write to Universal Studios to have them do something special for *CREATURE*'s golden anniversary in 2004. They've done it with other films—why not *CREATURE*? A 50th anniversary happens only once, and I hope they do something special to recognize it. Aloha!

Ben Chapman likes to keep in touch with Creature fans through his website at [www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2084/creature.html](http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2084/creature.html) as well as E-mail (the reelgillman@webtv.net).



## TOM HENNESY

*Continued from page 33*

**SS:** You knew a number of gay actors.

**TH:** I knew Rock Hudson and a lot of those guys. A lot of them were fairly tall, and I'm six-five, which is why I doubled actors like Robert Francis in *THE CAINE MUTINY*—he was about six four. Van Johnson was about the shortest guy I ever doubled. That didn't matter when I was out swimming with the sharks! (Laughs) They made a picture called *SECONDS*. John Frankenheimer was the director, and they shot the water sequences and beach stuff here on my property. Rock was here for 10 days, I would guess, and I renewed acquaintances with him. I was also under contract at the time they made *GIANT* and I worked on that. They wanted me to do the part of the café owner who gets in a fight with Hudson. I couldn't do it, because I was working on other things with Warners.

**SS:** You mentioned another acting role that you missed out on because of your position as a teacher within the studios. Did it bother you not to be able to take advantage of these opportunities? Did you have a desire to be a leading man?

**TH:** No, I wasn't interested in that, particularly. For one thing, I saw what kind of a life it was. I thought about it, but by that time I'd gotten married and shortly after that we had our first child. Hell, as it was, I didn't see much of my two eldest kids when they were at an impressionable age. I was always gone on locations. With my youngest daughter, it was even worse. I had trouble hanging on to my other work, teaching and the oil company, as a result of performing, so I just said, no, I didn't want to get involved in that.

**SS:** You could have had stardom, though.

**TH:** When Henry Wilson was trying to get me to let him represent me, I met him at a restaurant on the Sunset Strip. It was a very nice restaurant and bar. Anyway, I met him there for lunch one day. When I came in, it was kind of dark in the bar. Wilson came out from the back area where they had booze and took me back. He sat down at one side of the table and I sat opposite him. He said, "No, come sit over here. It's easier for me to talk to you." I figured, "No way am I sitting over there." So I sat opposite him and the next thing I know the guy's playing footsie with me under the table! I said, "Am I in your way? I could move my feet." He said, "Oh, no—did I step on you?" "Yes, you did; several times." So he made it clear what I'd be in for, and he told me—without flat out telling me—what the story was going to be. He said, "You don't have a girlfriend?" I said, "Yes, I do." "Is it serious?" "Yes, it is." "Well, there won't be time for that."

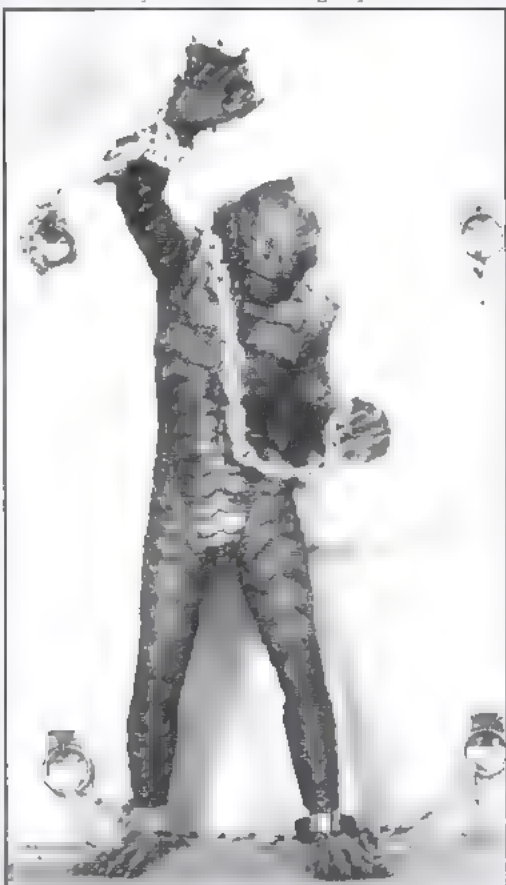
**SS:** Henry Wilson was famous for renaming his clients. Did he have a screen name picked out for you?

**TH:** Yes he did, he was going to change my name to Mack Truck or something like that! (Laughs) He came up with crazy-ass names like that—Rock Hudson, Tab Hunter, different things like that. He said, "You're going to have to give your

full attention to this business. You're on call 24 hours a day. You won't be working all the time, but you'll be on call. I spend a lot of time in Palm Springs. I stay at the tennis club. If I call you at 11 o'clock at night and tell you I'm in Palm Springs and I want you to meet some people, I want you ready to come and bring your tuxedo." Well, after several days with him calling me up, I told him that I just didn't think it was going to be possible for me.

**SS:** Wilson actually had a lot of power.

**TH:** Oh, he was wired into every studio, particularly Fox, to Warner Bros., Paramount, and Universal. He said, "I could take you tomorrow to three of the biggest of the major studios and get you a con-



The Gill Man spends much of *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* (1955) in captivity, but once he escapes his unchained melody is one of destruction.

tract at any one of them." He did that with all those guys. He did drop Clint Walker for a while, when Walker had that contract at Paramount and they dropped him. He couldn't get a job and actually ended up as a washman, before he signed to do *CHEYENNE*.

**SS:** Studio heads and directors also took a personal interest in actors and actresses. The director Arthur Lubin, for instance, took Clint Eastwood under his wing, and Eastwood had bit parts in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* and *TARANTULA*.

**TH:** I'll tell you a funny story—I was in the casting office one morning, and while I was there some guy came to the outside window and started talking with Bob, who worked there. They were arguing. As I recall, the guy was actually bawling

He was crying, he was so damn mad. Later, I asked, "What the hell was the matter with him?" And Bob said, "Oh, he's one of the new stock guys. He wanted to drive his car on the lot." They let the name actors and actresses park on the lot, but they had limited capacity. So Bob told the guy, "You have to park in the street like the extras do," and the guy was really mad! I said, "Well, who is this guy?" And Bob said, "His name's Clint Eastwood. He thinks he's somebody important—and he isn't! He's a damn stock p ayer and he's in your picture! He plays an assistant ichthyologist or something."

**SS:** He's only on the screen for a minute or so.

**TH:** I never even saw the picture until this year! When I finally did, I told my oldest daughter, who was going to Monterey for a horse show. I said, "Clint Eastwood has a restaurant up there in Carmel. Why don't you take this copy of *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* to his restaurant? Tell them that Clint Eastwood played his first part in a film that your father played the title role in" (Laughs) So she took it, but Eastwood wasn't available and no one else would talk to her. If you ever play one of those trivia games, that's a good question—who played the title role in Clint Eastwood's first film?

**SS:** How did your own stint in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* come about?

**TH:** They had me come in and talk with William Alland, the producer, a few times. We went down to the aquarium in St. Augustine, Florida. They had a motel next to the facility, and that's where most of the actors stayed. It was a miserable place, really. It was in the summer, and they had mosquitoes and little gnats called "no-see-ums," tiny white things that would get through any kind of netting. God, it was awful! At night, they'd have pickup trucks with tanks of oil in them, and they'd spray this stuff to keep away the mosquitoes from the swamps. Right across the road from where we stayed, there were swamps! It was bad! It was hot, really hot, and when you were in the Creature suit it was worse. It took a long time to get in the doggone thing, because it was skin tight and very restrictive. You didn't want to urinate on yourself, so you'd just have to hold it. You were lucky if you had enough time at noon to get the thing open far enough to urinate. You usually couldn't, so sometimes you'd spend a whole day not urinating.

**SS:** Your first scene as the Gill Man is when you're being lowered on a dolly from the back of a truck and into the holding pool.

**TH:** Oh, it was quite a distance—quite a height—though it doesn't look like it in the stills. I'd say it was probably at least 25 feet. So I'm lying in this thing and they were getting ready to raise me. They'd had a couple of test runs and it was rickety and cracking. I said to the operator, "Is this thing really safe?" And he said, "Well, I wouldn't say it's safe for people. We've had some accidents with it." I said, "Like what?" He said, "Well, just a couple of weeks ago, it slipped, unwound, and killed a porpoise." And I

thought, "Oh, my God! It's starting already!" (Laughs) That was the situation, and I was pretty anxious while we shot that scene.

**SS:** The film had a particularly dangerous stunt, when you jumped off the pier with Ginger Stanley, who was doubling Lori Nelson.

**TH:** Yes, that was a bitch! That almost killed me! That was right at the end of the shooting in Florida. We came up to Jacksonville by boat, and shot a lot of stuff along the inland waterway. I didn't know about bull sharks—those damn things are in those inland waterways in the brackish water, and they get big! They're the ones responsible for almost all of the attacks in Florida, along with a few tiger sharks. Tiger sharks are mostly deep-water sharks, but these bulls frequent the beaches. Any way, I was doing a lot of swimming as we went up the inland waterway, and I had no idea what was in the water. You have a feeling of invulnerability when you're in that Creature suit—you think, if something bites you, they're going to get a mouthful of foam rubber. It's different when you're in a pair of small swim trunks. I didn't realize until after I'd jumped in the water a few times that there were signs all over the doggone place—out to the buoy and around on the wharf—saying "No Swimming Allowed! Danger!" I didn't know what the danger was, but I found out it was from all kinds of stuff—the sharks, the dirty water, and the currents. It was a screwy river. I think it's one of only two rivers in the country that run north. They don't run toward the ocean; they run in the opposite direction! I'm not sure how that happens, but, as a result, there are about three different currents at different depths. It looks quiet on top, but it's got a hell of a current.

**SS:** And you jumped in with Ginger Stanley?

**TH:** I told Ginger, "I'm going to make a head first dive, and as soon as we get un-

derwater I'm going to let you go." I knew it would be hard to get out to the buoy, and it would be safer if I let Ginger go. I didn't want to be too rough on her, but there was no direction. Jack Arnold wasn't worth squat directing action scenes. So that's what I did, and we got that shot, finally.

**SS:** Then you had to swim out to the buoy.

**TH:** They had several piece of equipment out there, like rowboats. The lights were on a barge. They only had one thing they could have used as a rescue boat, a small speedboat. Ginger and I were standing in the back cockpit of that boat, waiting to continue with the sequence of me pulling her down and being lost underwater. I had about 35 pounds of weights on under my suit, which was a bitch because it was a skintight suit. They were plate weights in order to contradict the suit's natural buoyancy. And I couldn't see diddly out of that mask. The only vision I had were through small holes in the pupils, I had no peripheral vision or anything like that. I was trying to get oriented in this damn thing, and I turned around and saw this line. They must have tied it fore and aft, but the one on the transom was underwater right near the propeller, under the rudder. I said, "Why is that tied? This thing should be ready to go. We're going to be out in that Goddamn river and you'd better be ready." I told two or three guys. Finally, Jack Arnold came up on some kind of rowboat. I said, "Jack, there's a problem. There's a line in the water, back aft, right at the transom, and it could very easily get fowled in the screw." And he said, "You do your job and we'll do ours!" And that really pissed me off! So I said, "Well, you better do yours!" Maybe five minutes later, they said, "Get ready!" and we got back in the water. I came up, grabbed Ginger, and pulled her down maybe five to eight

feet and let her go. By that time, I was being taken by a current going in the opposite direction from where I thought the current was running. I didn't know it, but the same thing was happened to Ginger—and she was on the surface. She had a lightweight summer gown on; it was really flimsy stuff, so she didn't have any restrictions. But I had all that weight on me and no vision or anything, and it was about three o'clock in the morning. I was gone. I was a long way from the buoy and equipment and when I surfaced I yelled like hell—"Hey, get somebody over here!"—and down I went again. I must have gone another 30 yards and came back up again. I couldn't see the shore. I couldn't see anything! I just yelled, "Help! Help!" and down I went again. The next time I came up, I heard some voices and a boat appeared. It was a big skiff with a big outboard motor, and there were two young guys from Jacksonville, who had been on the beach watching us. They heard me yell, so they got to me in time. I don't think I would have made it to another surfacing. It was really awful. And then, when I finally got back, I found out that what I'd warned them about was exactly what happened—the damn pickup boat got fouled in the line and they couldn't move, and there was nothing else that could get to me. God, it was unbelievable! In those days, and under circumstances like that, you didn't have a stunt coordinator and you had to figure things out for yourself. They weren't very receptive to input from a stunt guy or the guy playing a part—even the major part—in a picture.

**NEXT: The Gill Man, The Duke, and Hollywood's Kids . . .**

**LEFT:** Tom Hennesy flashes a smile minus his Gill Man paraphernalia. **RIGHT:** Ginger Stanley doubles for Lori Nelson as Blackie Lagoon makes off with the heroine in *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE*.





# Crimson Chronicles

by Forrest J Ackerman



**H** was The Lord High Minister of All That is Sinister

When the trailer for *MAD LOVE* (1935) came on the screen, it announced that Charles Chaplin considered Peter Lorre the greatest living actor. Prior to that, he had only been known to audiences via his legendary role as the child murderer in Fritz Lang's mono-named *M* (1931). Legend has it that, at the preview of *MAD LOVE* in Glendale, there was a climax where his head was torn off and thrown in a river. I have never met anyone who claims to have seen this scene. Not even Ray Bradbury or the late Robert (PSYCHO) Bloch.

Many years ago, there was an annual image movie festival in Trieste, but Flavia Paulon, the sponsor, died, followed by her successor, a genial gentleman, and that spelled finis to the festival. Before its end, I saw Peter Lorre in the film he directed and starred in, *THE LOST ONE* (1951).

It is a little-known fact that director Curtis Harrington wanted him for the role of the fisherman in *NIGHT TIDE* (1963), but by then Lorre was beyond the film's budget.

There was talk in the mid-thirties of remaking *METROPOLIS* (1926) as a talking film with Conrad Veidt as the master of the supercity (pop. 60 million) and Peter Lorre in the role originally played by Rudolf Klein-Rogge, the mad scientist creator of the robotrix known in the book as Parody, in the film as the false Maria, and in the living room of the Ackermansion as *Ultima Futura Automaton* (from the initials of the producing company UFA, the Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft—or, in English, Universe Film Co.).

I once saw Lorre on a stage at the University of California, speaking in conjunction with Fritz Lang. He made a very erudite impression.

I sat beside him and chatted with him during a break in filming of the Karloff Price version of *THE RAVEN* (1963). Incidentally, during that shoot I saw the first appearance of a young actor named Jack Nicholson, who, of course, is famous these days for his roles in *THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK* (1987), *WOLF* (1994), and Stephen King's twice-filmed *THE SHINING* (1980).

I don't know where I heard this story and if it is apocryphal or somebody's wild imagination, but recently I was having dinner with Curtis Harrington and he

had heard the same story. It seems one midnight Lorre and Lugosi (both Hungarians) were roaming around town, perhaps a bit under the influence of a little Magyar mash, and they came upon a large outdoor clock that somehow attracted their attention. They simultaneously seem to have gotten a quixotic notion to climb up and tinker with the hands. Across the street was a ladder which they commandeered. Peter was up top when a cop came strolling by and stopped to observe what was going on. Peter's eyes popped, *Bela* wished he had his cape to hide behind. But the officer recognized them and, apparently thinking what they were up to was only natu-



**What horror lurks off-camera that it gives pause to such frightmasters as Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, and Vincent Price? Could it possibly be the Ackermmonster himself, paying a visit to the set of American International's *THE RAVEN* (1963)?**

ral (or supernatural) blinked the other way and passed on by, leaving them to their macabre midnight machinations.

I was at Peter Lorre's funeral. The hall was packed, but I could stand outside and hear Vincent Price's eulogy over a loudspeaker. Later, I saw Peter's sad little daughter emerge. Years later, all grown up, she attended the second New York Famous Monsters Convention and we became arm-in-arm friends. She lost a baby due to diabetes. She narrowly escaped being murdered by the infamous Hillside Strangler of Hollywood. She quietly passed away some years ago. Celia Lovsky (Lorre's first wife and last

love; she spent more time in the cemetery with his urn of ashes after he died than among the living) became Peter's daughter's surrogate mother. She looked after her as best she could. (She was more like a grandmother.) She always referred to her as "the child."

Some years before I befriended Celia, I was with Fritz Lang seeing a revival of his *WEARY DEATH* (1921) and a Dr. Mabuse film. When the lights went up for an intermission, two rows behind was Celia Lovsky. (She played Lon Chaney's mother in 1957's *THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES*, was in 1967's *THE POWER* and 1973's *SOYLENT GREEN*, and was the Queen of Spock's planet in a *STAR TREK* episode.) Lang had known her 50 years before in Berlin, and introduced her to me. I cringed. When Peter Lorre died, it had happened at an unfortunate time—I only had six lines left in the issue of *Famous Monsters* about to go to press, and (though I don't purport to be a poet of Bradbury's stature) I wrote a sincere little verse about Lorre's passing. It was the most unfortunate thing I ever did in 200 issues, because everybody jumped on me and shouted, "How could you throw away Peter Lorre in a lousy little poem?" So I thought, "Oh, god, here comes the first wife and last love of Lorre, now I'm going to get it!" But the dear lady looked at me lovingly and said, "Oh, Mr. Ackerman—the poem! I loved the poem!" So I felt, Vindication; if Celia Lovsky loved the poem, the hell with the rest of the world!

We became dear friends, and one day she opened a drawer in her room and it was full of fotos of Lorre. "Take all you want," she offered me; "take them all." Among them were fotos of her on the stage as *Alraune*, the role of the mysterious mandragora played once silently by Brigitte (METROPOLIS) Helm and she again in a talkie, *DAUGHTER OF EVIL* (1930).

For awhile there was an actor around town who called himself Peter Lorre Jr. He actually looked a lot like him and got work because some producers believed him. But Celia assured me Lorre never had a son and the law finally caught up with "Jr." and a judge ordered him to cease & desist.

There will never be another Karloff or Lugosi or Cushing or Chaney Sr. or Price... or Peter Lorre.



# BOOK ENDS

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### SCREENED OUT

Richard Barrios  
Routledge, 2002  
402 pages—\$29.95

Film historian Richard Barrios, whose previous book, *A Song in the Dark* (1995), has become the definitive work on the dawn of the musical film, has written a new book that is not only up our alley, but, in fact, right up our (Scarlet) street!

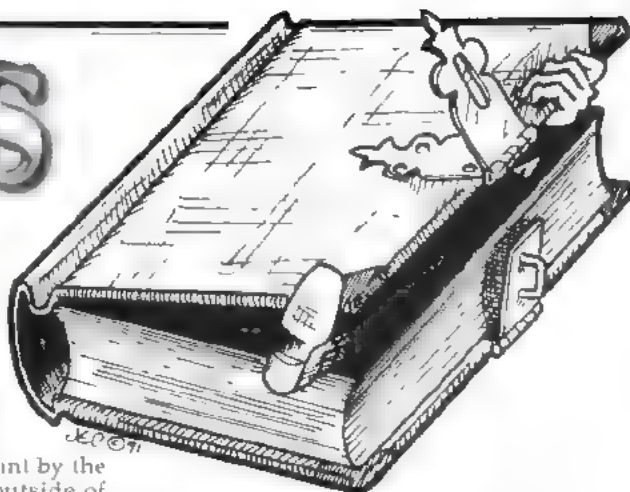
*Screened Out: Playing Gay in Hollywood From Edison to Stonewall* is, by Barrios' own admission, inspired by the pioneering work of the late Vito Russo, whose *The Celluloid Closet* (1981) must stand as a beacon and a challenge to other writers who would examine the image of the homosexual as portrayed in the cinema. What sets this new book apart is Barrios' respectful contention that Russo's scope was not only limited by what was available to him for research, but by what effect Russo wished *Closet* to have on the reader—mainly, indignation, both at the type of and scarcity of the portrayals of gay women and men on the screen.

Barrios, through his exquisitely exhaustive and sensitive scholarship, points us to a wider and less scorned gay presence throughout the history of the American film (to which he limits this book). Beyond this, he asserts that in certain periods, such as the early thirties, the stereotypical "pansy" and the "masculine woman" were much more accepted

by other characters as part of the everyday story of the film than is supposed, even if many of these portrayals did serve as outrageous comic relief. Barrios goes further, to show how these notable characters were recognized for what they were and accepted without complaint by the audiences of the time, even outside of the supposedly more liberal metropolitan areas.

That's not to say that the situation remained unchanged. Barrios, relying throughout on studio documents such as memos, censor's notes, reviews, and also the recollections of contemporary audience members, nimbly illuminates his points; in this case, the reasons for the coming of the restrictive and infamous Production Code of 1934, and its results upon the depiction of gays (and, delightfully, how the use of gay characters in film nevertheless continued throughout those censorious times).

To linger upon Barrios' deft retelling of Hollywood politics is to shortchange the panache, the lightness of touch, and the sheer wit he brings to the table. This is a book that will have you up late turning pages in pleasure to get to the next delicious passage. For example, there is this on Billy de Wolfe, "... an overtly queer presence who fancied himself covert... seeing him as a girl-hungry wolf in

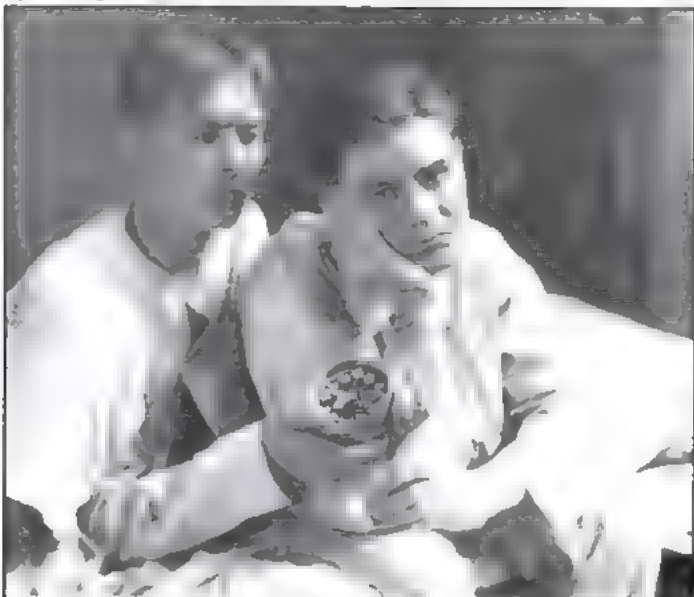


one example, the appearance in 1957's low-budget horror potboiler *VOODOO ISLAND* of an out, cool, sophisticated lesbian whose advances are refused, but who is not a pathetic or grotesque figure. True, Barrios notes, she dies, but then that's more a function of the fright flick's "who's next" plot than the traditional "queer who must die" wrap-up, for a change.

As the title tells us, the book ends at the beginning of the Stonewall era, after having cast a critical eye at the sixties so-called "sex comedies" of Doris Day and Rock Hudson, and a shrewd examination of the milestone that was *THE BOYS IN THE BAND* (1970). Barrios, in an epilogue, touches on what was to come; still, as *Screened Out* takes its place, as it surely will, as the last word on American cinema's love/hate affair with the homosexual image, one hopes that this author will give us in due time a Volume Two just as engrossing, eye-opening, and downright entertaining as this fine and deeply-felt book.

—Bob Gutowski

**TOM BROWN OF CULVER (1932)** featured, according to *Screened Out*, a "homoerotically charged enmity" between Bob Randolph (Richard Cromwell) and Tom Brown (played by Tom Brown). The boys eye each other distrustfully until, rehearsing for the school dance, they have to take a few spins together. After that, they're much friendlier.



TEA FOR TWO (1950) is tantamount to witnessing the birth of science fiction. Indeed, the staying power of the "pansy" is well-documented by Barrios; *Screened Out* might have been subtitled "The Triumph of Franklin Pangborn," as that expert farceur's surprisingly on-lived career runs like a lavender thread throughout the book.

As genre fans readers of *Scarlet Street* will be especially interested in not only the (expected) sections on the predatory lesbians of *REBECCA* (1940) and *THE UNINVITED* (1944), but, to cite

### THE CARTOON MUSIC BOOK

edited by Daniel Goldmark and Yuval Taylor  
A Cappella Books, 2002  
336 pages—\$18.98

*The Cartoon Music Book* is a welcome addition to the cartoon fan's library, and notable as the first book solely devoted to the musical score as it relates to animation, both past and present. This is an often overlooked aspect of animation—indeed, of film and music in general—and this unique anthology contains a mixture of new articles and interviews and reprinted pieces. The reprints are amongst the book's strengths, particularly the Carl Stalling interview. Originally published in a 1971 issue of the now defunct *Funnyworld* (the first and most notable animation magazine), this was the only extensive interview ever conducted with the man behind so many Looney Tunes scores (from 1936 until 1958). It's particularly notable for the information on Stalling's time at Disney and his personal background, as well as his insights into the technical aspects of animation scoring. Further perspectives on Carl Stalling are provided by Warner Bros. expert Will Friedwald, and Kevin Whitehead, in a



new piece entitled "Carl Stalling, Improviser, and Bill Lava, Acme Minimalist." "Minimalist" is the most flattering term one could use to describe former "Zorro" composer Lava's mediocre contributions to Warners' cartoons in the declining sixties despite the title, Lava is deservedly accorded one paragraph.

Also worthwhile among the reprints are vintage articles by Chuck Jones (imparting his ideas on the uses of music in animation), and MGM composer Scott Bradley. The Bradley pieces are especially welcome, for in his own way Bradley's contributions (especially in Tex Avery's output) were almost as significant as those of Stalling at Warners or Churchill, Harline, and others at Disney.

The new pieces range from a thorough discussion of classical works in animation by editor Goldmark and a piece on the many cartoon uses of Raymond Scott's work, to a lively examination of rock 'n' roll and cartoon pop bands. Daniel Wondrich's piece on *THE BAND CONCERT* (1935) draws attention to itself by virtue of its claim that the short represented the conflict between the world of minstrel shows and that of the Northern middle class whites, with Donald Duck aligned with the former and Mickey Mouse with the latter. Wondrich also attempts to suggest that the black-and-white Mickey Mouse design was meant to evoke a blackface caricature. While the argument is confidently expressed in detail, I cannot fully agree, and it is the closest the book comes to overly intellectual analysis. The anthology is capped off by a thorough discography of records and CDs that feature the works of notable cartoon composers—and also alerts one to the fact that the Flintstones once warbled the songs from *MARY POPPINS* (1964).

—Andrew Leal

#### THE HAUNTED WORLD OF MARIO BAVA

Troy Howarth

FAB Press Publication, 2002

352 pages \$34.99

The lurid cover art depicts a bound Barbara Steele about to have "the mask of Satan" (a steel spiked vizard) pressed into her tender flesh by a black masked executioner of the Inquisition. It's the most famous scene from the most famous film of cinematographer/director Mario Bava (1914-1980).

This heavily illustrated tome is the first book-length English language consideration of the career and films of the man who went from being an outstanding cinematographer and special effects technician to the cult director of such Italian Gothics as *BLACK SUNDAY* (1960), *BLACK SABBATH* (1963), and *LISA AND THE DEVIL* (1972). Along the way, Mario Bava also made some of the most colorful and bloody examples of the giallo genre—*BLOOD AND BLACK LACE* (1964) and *TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE* (1971), the former considered the *ne plus ultra* of that genre, while the latter was the template for the popular *FRIDAY THE 13TH* cycle of "body count" horror movies. Author Troy Howarth,

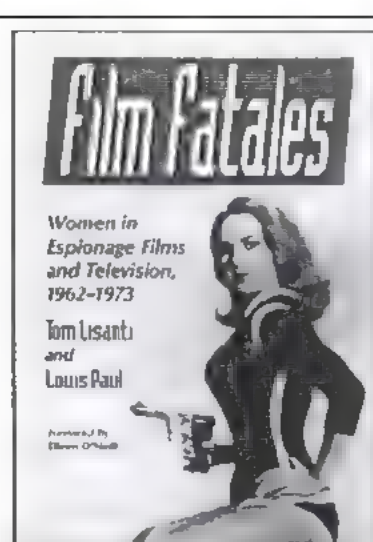
dutifully points out these connections, along with the fact that Bava's *PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES* (1965) was the inspiration for the story and visual style of Ridley Scott's 1979 success, *ALIEN*.

Howarth describes his intent as, "primarily an 'auteur' study of Mario Bava, taken from the perspective that it was he who acted as the guiding vision behind the films he directed." Bava, undoubtedly an ingenious director of low-budgeted horror films, also worked less successfully in other genres. One has only to consider *DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS* (1966) and his unwatchable comedy western *ROY COLT & WINCHESTER JACK* (1970). The most haunting aspect of *The Haunted World of Mario Bava* is Bava's comment in one of several interviews that end the book: "In my entire career, I made only big bullshits, no doubt about that." Pressed to explain why his films are well regarded by horror fans, his sharp-tongued retort is "Nowadays people lack culture." Howarth identifies several Bava themes and motifs, the most important being "the deceptive nature of appearances." Perhaps that explains Bava's cynicism.

Nevertheless, it remains difficult to not take Bava's words and works at face value. Howarth's perspective is a forced one which insists on comparisons with Ken Russell, Fellini, and Bertolucci, whose "brand of free spirited sexuality is far removed from the dark and morbid dreamscape of Mario Bava." Whoa! It seems that either *THE DEVILS* (1971), *FELLINI SATYRICON* (1970), and *LAST TANGO IN PARIS* (1973) never existed or Howarth missed the memorably dark and morbid dreamscapes these directors were famous for creating; at least that's what such an unfortunate and reductive comparison implies. I was finally not convinced by the conclusion that, "as a director and a cinematographer, Mario Bava did more to create the modern horror/thriller than any other director." Howarth isn't a bad writer, but he is simply not compelling enough to pull that one off. What about Val Lewton, Jacques Tourneur, Alfred Hitchcock, or Roger Corman? Still, Howarth makes his auteurist points clearly within each film and across the filmography. Those going in knowing nothing about the director will benefit from the detailed synopses preceding each analysis and an exhaustive filmography contributed by the estimable Julian Grainger.

What remains is a gorgeous book full of rare eye-catching graphics from the director's most famous to his most obscure projects. A personal favorite is a Spanish poster for *PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES*, which depicts a space craft bearing a distinct resemblance to a vacuum cleaner! The stills bear witness to the man's ability to compose arresting images. If the director himself denies the messages that the author suggests, then one is at least left a dossier of eye-drugging representations of a vision created out of applied craft, haste, improvisation, desperation, and barely perceived irony.

—Robert Monell



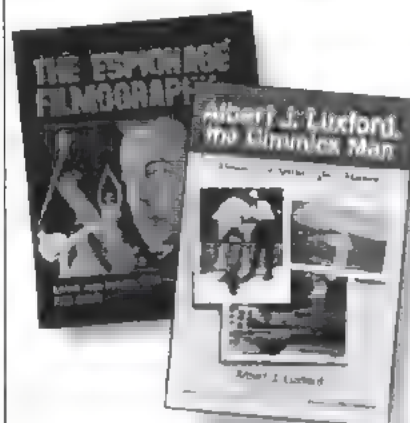
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# Columbia Horrors

Special Feature  
The  
Columbia  
Horrors  
Part Two  
by Ken Hanke



## Part Two

by Ken Hanke



Columbia may have gone out with something of a whimper at the end of the first wave of horror in 1936 with *THE MAN WHO LIVED TWICE*, but when horror re-emerged in 1939, the studio came back with an unreserved bang. Lacking any stock monsters like Universal had, Columbia took a different route, especially since they were obviously disinclined to invest the kind of money their rival studio had sunk into *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1939). It's hard to blame them. After all, the Frankenstein concept was a presold one—especially with the franchise a proven commodity following the 1938 reissues of *DRACULA* and *FRANKENSTEIN* (both 1931)—and Universal could afford to be lavish on that score alone.

Columbia's rationale was simple: they'd make one big investment by way of hiring the top horror star of the era, Boris Karloff. Beyond that, they didn't exactly tax themselves too much financially. This became abundantly clear from the onset with *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* (1939), the first of what would come to be loosely termed the Boris Karloff Mad Doctor series. Though the credits boasted a story by Lester T. White and George Wallace Sayre and a screenplay by Karl Brown (a kind of movie jack-of-all-trades, who would become best known for his work on this series), the truth was that it was little more than a reworking of *THE NINTH GUEST* (1934) in more specifically horrific terms. Nary a mention was made anywhere of this fact—and the obscurity of both the earlier film and its source novel, *The Invisible Host* (1930), kept the truth largely hidden.

Surprisingly, however, the resulting film was a good one, affording Karloff one of his most interesting characterizations and supplying a genuine quotient of horror. Brown's script, while not exactly original, and offering a somewhat drastic—albeit explained—shift in character part-way through, was tightly constructed and presented the star with some of the juiciest dialogue of his career.

Perhaps even more surprising was the direction of Nick Grinde, a lower-echelon director with a minor specialty in crime dramas, who had never made much of a name for himself, despite having been a working director since the late 1920s. There's little in Grinde's previous filmography to suggest an affinity for horror, with the exception of *THE BISHOP MURDER CASE* (1930). This early talkie from MGM—their failed attempt to establish Basil Rathbone as Philo Vance in competition with Paramount's William Powell series of Vance films—comes from that strange period when studios dabbled in assigning two directors to a film, one to handle the dramatic aspects of the story, the other to concentrate on the visuals. Grinde had been responsible for the visual side of *THE BISHOP MURDER CASE*, the one aspect of the film that had almost completely worked. In look and tone, this nominal mystery film was much closer to a horror picture. It is this quality that Grinde brought to *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, and, to a lesser degree, his two subsequent entries in the Mad Doctor series.

Interviewed by Richard Valley in *Scarlet Street* #17, actress Ann Doran remembered being directed by Nick

Grinde in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*: "As with actors, directors have to have a great deal of versatility. He was a great guy. He had done comedies, so he had that 'uplift'—always an 'up' feeling, you know? Even when he was angry or upset, he never let his actors see it—unless he was upset with them!"

*THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* isn't immediately a reworking of *THE NINTH GUEST*. It saves that aspect of its plot for the last act. The first sections of the film—which are actually the most interesting—are original material, used to set up the reworking of the earlier movie. Karloff plays Dr. Henryk Savaard, a research scientist who has developed a means of restoring life—at least under certain very specific circumstances. Following an assured, atmospheric opening (blessed with effective library scoring that is, unfortunately, soon dropped) staged by Grinde to prepare us for the melodramatics to come, the film gets right down to cases, plunging us directly into a neat meshing of exposition and plot.

It's very nearly a perfect blend of economy and atmosphere, even if the exposition seems a little forced when Betty Crawford (Ann Doran), Savaard's nurse, asks questions that must be for our benefit more than hers (She'd presumably have some idea of the doctor's work.) It could be argued, though, that Betty's just a little unnerved by the prospect of having her boyfriend, Bob Roberts (Stanley Brown), killed just so Dr. Savaard can bring the fellow back to life. "Well, can't you try it on a body that's already dead?" she asks. "Unfortunately, no," Savaard responds, "but if we can revive a man who's been scientifically put to death, then we have the perfect anesthetic—and in that moment the art of surgery will have advanced a thousand years."

None too surprisingly, Betty is considerably less delighted than Savaard by this scientific advance. More surprising is the fact that it never occurs to anyone that she might do something foolish to prevent the experiment from being carried out. Surely, it's the height of lunacy on Savaard's part to merely lock her out of the laboratory and assume that all will be

well. Then again, it isn't very long before we're given good reason to wonder how tightly wrapped the doctor is, despite the fact that he's supposedly a perfectly normal scientific genius.

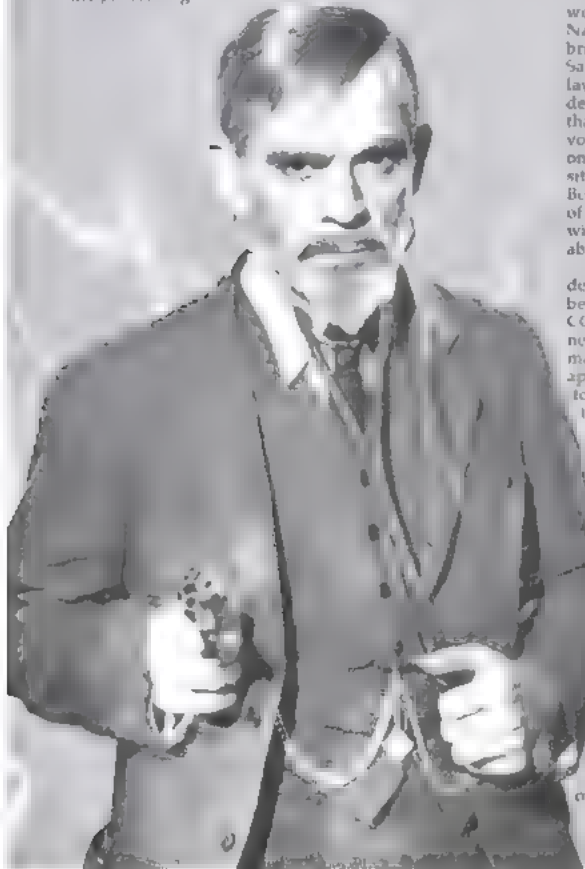
The laboratory scene itself—and all subsequent lab scenes—isn't terribly exciting, a fact probably owed to the film's scant budget (which likely explains the almost complete absence of a musical score, too), but one which works in the film's favor by adding to the realism of a more than usually sober and almost scientifically plausible concept. Savaard's idea of jump-starting dead people by forcing the heart back into action by means of his mechanical heart isn't all that farfetched, even though it sidesteps the question of what happens to a brain deprived of oxygen for a lengthy period of time, and the workings of the machine sound far more believable than they look (probably because the blood coursing through the tubes never looks like anything but water). Still, Grinde shoots these scenes with an eye toward atmosphere, filming





LEFT: started out trying to invent a coffee-maker and wound up with this Benevolent Dr. Henryk Savaard (Boris Karloff) displays his artificial heart to assistant Lang (Byron Foulger) in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* (1939). RIGHT: Nurse Betty (Ann Doran) isn't too thrilled that boyfriend Bob (Stanley Brown) is about to be killed

through the laboratory glassware (Grinde's visual style lies heavily on placing objects in the foreground to attain a sense of depth) and opting for unusual angles to enliven the proceedings



Again, this is mostly setup. Much of what happens, in fact, is brazenly expository, as when Savaard tells his assistant, Lang (Byron Foulger), "If anything fails us now, our lives as well as his are lost. We've taken a human life. If we don't restore that life, the law will call it murder." Naturally, the law *does* call it murder, thanks to Betty bringing in the police. The situation is made no better by Savaard's high-handed tactics with the representatives of law and order. He blandly tells them, "It's very simple. I've developed a technique for restoring the dead to life and that young man volunteered to be my first subject. Now, if you gentlemen will be so good as to leave my house, I'll go on with my work." That this isn't the best approach to the situation is quickly born out when Lieutenant Shane (Don Beddoe) presses Savaard on the topic of how he disposed of his volunteer. "I made use of certain gasses that end life without poisoning the tissue," he explains—and is, reasonably enough, immediately hauled off on a murder charge.

While the economy of the proceedings and Grinde's deft handling of it are admirable and effective, it quickly becomes apparent that the "genius" of *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* lies in the realization that the show is nearly all Boris Karloff, and both the script and direction make the most of his participation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the courtroom scenes. When District Attorney Drake (Roger Pryor) twists Savaard's scientific intentions into something oddly smacking of Nazi Germany and sways the jury into a death sentence mood, Karloff's previously overenthusiastic and reality-impaired scientist quickly tips over the edge into full-blown mad-doctorism.

Waxing megalomaniacal, the actor proceeds in a manner that would make fellow "scientists" Bela Lugosi, Lionel Atwill, and George Zucco rightly jealous.

Before you condemn me to death, I would like the privilege of addressing this court for two minutes," he asks Judge Bowman (Charles Trowbridge), who grants his request and probably soon wishes he hadn't. "You who have condemned me—I know your kind. Your forebears poisoned Socrates, burned Joan of Arc, hanged, tortured all those whose only offense was to bring light into darkness. To condemn me in my work is a crime so shameful that the judgment of history will be against you for all the years to come. You, Mr. Prosecutor, are guilty of murdering not only me, but countless thousands who might have lived had you not destroyed the only man who could save their lives. When your last mo-



LEFT: Boris Karloff was reunited with Edward Van Sloan, his adversary from *FRANKENSTEIN*, in *THE MUMMY* (1932), in *BEFORE I HANG* (1940). Taunted with the blood of a murderer, kindly Dr. John Garth (Karloff) turns killer and disposes of Otto Krone (Frank Richards).

ment comes, always remember that you killed the one man who could have made your discovery.

Having dispensed with the D.A., Savaard turns his attention to Betty. "Although the stupid, unthinking world may approve what you have done, in your heart you know that, but for your treachery, the boy you loved would be alive today. If anyone is responsible for his death, you killed him, and for that murder you will live and die in the contempt and loathing of your own heart."

Next comes the jury. "When those you love best lie dying, think back to the moment when you held their salvation in your hands and threw it away. Always remember that I offered you life and you gave me death."

Admittedly, Karloff's speech is standard mad doctor material. He'd even delivered something not entirely unlike it in his over-the-top performance as Janos Rukh in *THE INVISIBLE RAY* (1936). In *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, however, the dialogue is better written than usual and far more overtly megalomaniacal—coming off, in fact, as the quintessence of this sort of material. Karloff's outlandishly fine villainy in the role has largely gone unappreciated, possibly because Savaard's experiment has the illusion of reality and a more beneficial intent than that which we associate with the doc's less altruistic brethren. (Certainly, restarting the human circulatory system is more reasonable a goal than oversized bats, armies of werewolves, and electrically-charged simpsions.) Yet, once you remove the rationality of the experiment and the token sympathy afforded the character, Karloff's diatribe is as wild and woolly and deserving of enshrinement in the horror pantheon as anything from Lugosi in *THE DEVIL BAT* (1940), Zucco in *THE MAD MONSTER* (1942), or Atwill in both *THE VAMPIRE BAT* (1913) and *MAN-MADE MONSTER* (1941).

The courtroom speech is the highlight of *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, at least in the extended depiction of Savaard's theatrical villainy. The film then settles nicely into other, shorter, happy moments of Karloffiana, such as his response to the prison chaplain when asked if he can't conceive of a truth too great to be analyzed by the mind of man. "Tonight, no. Tomorrow, I may know better." The piece de resistance of this kind of repartee, however, is saved for the moment when Lang restores the hanged scientist to life, telling Savaard, "When you stand on the platform, the living proof of your triumph, the whole world will pay you homage." It's quickly apparent that hanging has done nothing to better Savaard's take on the world. He reasons, "They won't come to learn, only to



stare. I'll be a freak in a sideshow—Lazarus the Second. 50 cents to look, a dollar to touch!" (This may be the best moment of revenge-motivated hatred in Karloff's career.)

Ann Doran fondly recalled her association with Boris Karloff. "Oh, he was the sweetest man that God ever made on this earth. We worked very late hours on that one, and Karloff never lost his good humor. It didn't bother him to go over and over something, because he always wanted to do a good job."

Following Dr. Savaard's resurrection, *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* becomes a scaled-down variation on *THE NINTH GUEST*—with a touch of *THE RAVEN* (1935) thrown in for good measure. (Once they're enticed inside, steel shutters keep Savaard's unwitting guests from leaving his home.) This is also the section of the film in which Grinde's directorial skill comes fully into play. Karloff's lines are still sharp. "As you perhaps know, hanging breaks the neck. Would you be professionally interested in seeing how it is repaired?" he inquires of Dr. Stoddard (Joe De Stefano), who wouldn't allow him the chance to restore Bob Roberts to life. There are also delightfully perfidious moments of sadistic glee over Savaard's legally unique situation—"I have a perfect alibi. I am legally dead," "Six jurors have been killed, but what public official would dare to suggest that Henry Savaard was guilty of the crimes when all the world knows that Henry Savaard is dead," and "What sane police officer would dare to even whisper that what they'll find in this house tonight might be the work of a dead man?"

At this point, the film involves itself primarily with wrapping up the plot, which it does in a wholly too rapid manner, cheating Savaard out of most of his revenge. This is unfortunate not only because it rushes the material, but because it's hard to believe that anyone in the audience would be too terribly upset if the only survivors of the doctor's scheme were his daughter, Janet (Lorna Gray), and her newspaperman boyfriend, Scoop Foley (Robert Wilcox). It's to Grinde's credit that he captures at least something of the same panache that Roy William Neill achieved in *THE NINTH GUEST*, especially since Grinde didn't have the same design resources available to him.

While too cost-conscious to achieve classic status on its own merits, *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* is one of the best of all films that can be properly described as a Boris Karloff vehicle. It's all Boris, all the time, and fans of the actor and the genre are hardly likely to quibble. It also

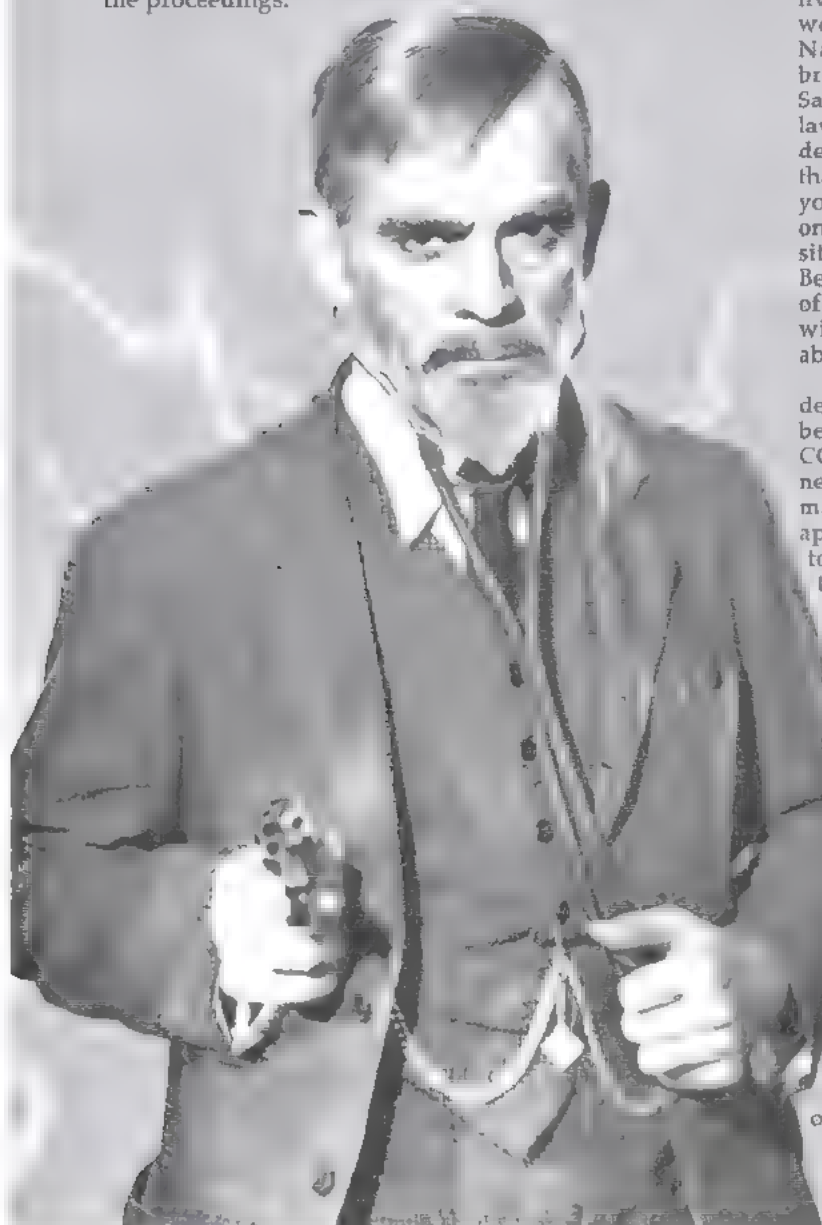
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LEFT: "I started out trying to invent a coffee-maker and wound up with this!" Benevolent Dr. Henryk Savaard (Boris Karloff) displays his artificial heart to assistant Lang (Byron Foulger) in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* (1939). RIGHT: Nurse Betty (Ann Doran) isn't too thrilled that boyfriend Bob (Stanley Brown) is about to be killed.

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Again, this is mostly setup. Much of what happens, in fact, is brazenly expository, as when Savaard tells his assistant, Lang (Byron Foulger), "If anything fails us now, our lives as well as his are lost. We've taken a human life. If we don't restore that life, the law will call it murder." Naturally, the law does call it murder, thanks to Betty bringing in the police. The situation is made no better by Savaard's high-handed tactics with the representatives of law and order. He blandly tells them, "It's very simple. I've developed a technique for restoring the dead to life and that young man volunteered to be my first subject. Now, if you gentlemen will be so good as to leave my house, I'll go on with my work." That this isn't the best approach to the situation is quickly born out when Lieutenant Shane (Don Beddoe) presses Savaard on the topic of how he disposed of his volunteer. "I made use of certain gasses that end life without poisoning the tissue," he explains—and is, reasonably enough, immediately hauled off on a murder charge.

While the economy of the proceedings and Grinde's deft handling of it are admirable and effective, it quickly becomes apparent that the "genius" of *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* lies in the realization that the show is nearly all Boris Karloff, and both the script and direction make the most of his participation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the courtroom scenes. When District Attorney Drake (Roger Pryor) twists Savaard's scientific intentions into something oddly smacking of Nazi Germany and sways the jury into a death sentence mood, Karloff's previously overenthusiastic and reality-impaired scientist quickly tips over the edge into full-blown mad-doctorism.

Waxing megalomaniacal, the actor proceeds in a manner that would make fellow "scientists" Bela Lugosi, Lionel Atwill, and George Zucco rightly jealous. "Before you condemn me to death, I would like the privilege of addressing this court for two minutes," he asks Judge Bowman (Charles Trowbridge), who grants his request and probably soon wishes he hadn't. "You who have condemned me—I know your kind. Your forbearers poisoned Socrates, burned Joan of Arc, hanged, tortured all those whose only offense was to bring light into darkness. To condemn me in my work is a crime so shameful that the judgment of history will be against you for all the years to come. You, Mr. Prosecutor, are guilty of murdering not only me, but countless thousands who might have lived had you not destroyed the only man who could save their lives. When your last mo-



**LEFT:** Boris Karloff was reunited with Edward Van Sloan, his adversary from *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931) and *THE MUMMY* (1932) in *BEFORE I HANG* (1940). Tainted with the blood of a murderer, kindly Dr. John Garth (Karloff) turns killer and disposes of Otto Krone (Frank Richards).



ment comes, always remember that you killed the one man who could have made your life secure."

Having dispensed with the D.A., Savaard turns his attention to Betty. "Although the stupid, unthinking world may approve what you have done, in your heart you know that, but for your treachery, the boy you loved would be alive today. If anyone is responsible for his death, you killed him, and for that murder you will live and die in the contempt and loathing of your own heart."

Next comes the jury. "When those you love best lie dying, think back to the moment when you held their salvation in your hands and threw it away. Always remember that I offered you life and you gave me death."

Admittedly, Karloff's speech is standard mad doctor material. He'd even delivered something not entirely unlike it in his over-the-top performance as Janos Rukh in *THE INVISIBLE RAY* (1936). In *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, however, the dialogue is better written than usual and far more overtly megalomaniacal—coming off, in fact, as the quintessence of this sort of material. Karloff's outlandishly fine villainy in the role has largely gone unappreciated, possibly because Savaard's experiment has the illusion of reality and a more beneficial intent than that which we associate with the doc's less altruistic brethren. (Certainly, restarting the human circulatory system is more reasonable a goal than oversized bats, armies of werewolves, and electrically-charged simpletons.) Yet, once you remove the rationality of the experiment and the token sympathy afforded the character, Karloff's diatribe is as wild and woolly and deserving of enshrinement in the horror pantheon as anything from Lugosi in *THE DEVIL BAT* (1940), Zucco in *THE MAD MONSTER* (1942), or Atwill in both *THE VAMPIRE BAT* (1933) and *MAN-MADE MONSTER* (1941).

The courtroom speech is the highlight of *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, at least in the extended depiction of Savaard's theatrical villainy. The film then settles nicely into other, shorter, happy moments of Karloffiana, such as his response to the prison chaplain when asked if he can't conceive of a truth too great to be analyzed by the mind of man. "Tonight, no. Tomorrow, I may know better." The piece de resistance of this kind of repartee, however, is saved for the moment when Lang restores the hanged scientist to life, telling Savaard, "When you stand on the platform, the living proof of your triumph, the whole world will pay you homage." It's quickly apparent that hanging has done nothing to better Savaard's take on the world. He reasons, "They won't come to learn, only to

stare. I'll be a freak in a sideshow—Lazarus the Second. 50 cents to look, a dollar to touch!" (This may be the best moment of revenge-motivated hatred in Karloff's career.)

Ann Doran fondly recalled her association with Boris Karloff: "Oh, he was the sweetest man that God ever made on this earth. We worked very late hours on that one, and Karloff never lost his good humor. It didn't bother him to go over and over something, because he always wanted to do a good job."

Following Dr. Savaard's resurrection, *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* becomes a scaled-down variation on *THE NINTH GUEST*—with a touch of *THE RAVEN* (1935) thrown in for good measure. (Once they're enticed inside, steel shutters keep Savaard's unwitting guests from leaving his home.) This is also the section of the film in which Grinde's directorial skill comes fully into play. Karloff's lines are still sharp. "As you perhaps know, hanging breaks the neck. Would you be professionally interested in seeing how it is repaired?" he inquires of Dr. Stoddard (Joe De Stefano), who wouldn't allow him the chance to restore Bob Roberts to life. There are also delightfully perfidious moments of sadistic glee over Savaard's legally unique situation—"I have a perfect alibi. I am legally dead," "Six jurors have been killed, but what public official would dare to suggest that Henry Savaard was guilty of the crimes when all the world knows that Henry Savaard is dead," and "What sane police officer would dare to even whisper that what they'll find in this house tonight might be the work of a dead man?"

At this point, the film involves itself primarily with wrapping up the p.o.t, which it does in a wholly too rapid manner, cheating Savaard out of most of his revenge. This is unfortunate not only because it rushes the material, but because it's hard to believe that anyone in the audience would be too terribly upset if the only survivors of the doctor's scheme were his daughter, Janet (Lorna Gray), and her newspaperman boyfriend, Scoop Foley (Robert Wilcox). It's to Grinde's credit that he captures at least something of the same panache that Roy William Neill achieved in *THE NINTH GUEST*, especially since Grinde didn't have the same design resources available to him.

While too cost-conscious to achieve classic status on its own merits, *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* is one of the best of all films that can be properly described as a Boris Karloff vehicle. It's all Boris, all the time, and fans of the actor and the genre are hardly likely to quibble. It also

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# Scarlett's Sisters

## Evelyn Keyes



Interview by David Del Valle

**E**velyn Keyes is not a typical Hollywood movie actress who dwells in the past. On the contrary, she is very much a woman of the moment who fills her life with the here and now. It was only when she discovered her talent as a writer

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**T**he "girl next door"—the accessible beauty we can identify with and always count on—is an American fascination. She's Andy Hardy's girlfriend through all his romances with other girls played by Judy Garland, Lana Turner, and Kathryn Grayson. She's the ever-patient bride-to-be of

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### EVELYN KEYES

Continued from page 56  
that she began looking backward at a life well spent.

The actress is perhaps better known for being married to famous men, such as directors John Huston and Charles Vidor, than being *Scarlett O'Hara's* Younger Sister, which just happens to be the title of her first book of memoirs, published in 1977. Having begun writing, she teamed up with Tab Hunter and started working on scripts for his production company and then actively trying to get them made. She also found time to have a regular column in the *Los Angeles Times*, bringing the current Hollywood scene under the scrutiny of a woman who has seen it all.

My meeting with Evelyn Keyes took place in a Beverly Hills apartment, which was being used as a backdrop for a photo shoot for a book on Hollywood Survivors. The young photographer, Karl Kuehn, had acquired a reputation in Europe and was anxious to advance it even further in Hollywood. My job was to secure as many legendary ladies as possible for Karl's knowing lens.

I managed to find him Hermione Baddeley, Natalie Schafer, Rose Hobart, and Elizabeth Bergner. It was a surprise to Karl to find Evelyn Keyes utterly different from these others. She arrived for the photo shoot completely prepared and yet questioning the motives of the young photographer. She made it very clear that it was the Hollywood of today that interested her and that she was a bit weary of the GONE WITH THE WIND connection that everyone makes regarding her life in the spotlight. She used that connection for not only her first book, but her second as well, *I'll Think About That Tomorrow* (1991), which chronicled her divorce from musician Artie Shaw and subsequent return to Hollywood.

I used the occasion of the photo shoot to conduct this interview, talking her into it when I mentioned that she had made a film with Boris Karloff and she bet me that I was mistaken. After I put *BEFORE I HANG MY HEAD* on the videocassette player, she looked at about 10 minutes of it and exclaimed, "That white-haired man was Boris Karloff?" I enjoyed her candid and honest recollections, and especially the fact she was giving them to me, a stranger, whom she had decided to trust.

Until the occasion of this interview being published in *Scarlett Street*, I hadn't listened to the audiocassette of that afternoon so many summers ago. I will always remember Evelyn Keyes as a very tough, opinionated, and ultimately savvy woman in a town much too prone to youthful flavors of the month.

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**Scarlett Street:** It's an inevitable question, but how did you get the role of Surlen O'Hara of *GONE WITH THE WIND*?

**Evelyn Keyes:** Shortly after coming to L.A. with my sister, a young man came over and said, "You ought to be in pictures. I'm an agent and I can help you." He took me to Cecil B. DeMille, who signed

me to a personal contract. The first thing DeMille asked of me was to get rid of my Southern accent! (Laughs) Yet he sent me to David O. Selznick, anyway, and the role of Surlen O'Hara was mine. **LK:** Tell us about your first meeting with David Selznick.

**SK:** Well, in the grand tradition of Hollywood casting, he chased me around his office in a kind of halfhearted fashion. I was told later by another actress that he was popping Benzedrine all the time and it made him feel that this was the way a mogul behaved! (Laughs)

**SK:** Did you like Clark Gable?

**FK:** He was so striking in person, even more so than on the screen. Gable was the epitome of the movie star. I remember, later on in my career, he walked into the commissary dining room and heads turned. He was the King of Hollywood. **SK:** Hattie McDaniel was the first black woman to win an Academy Award, for her role as Mammy.

**FK:** It's with disgust that I remember the way she and Butterfly McQueen were treated by all of the film community. First of all, at the premiere in Atlanta, they weren't even invited to attend. I remember the whole city dressing up in Confederate uniforms and whooping rebel yells on every street corner. It was the Deep South and nothing was going to change that! There was not a black face in the whole audience that night—only on the screen in front of them. Whenever I go to tributes for *GONE WITH THE WIND*, I wonder what Hattie McDaniel and Butterfly McQueen would have said if given the chance.

**SK:** How many directors were on *GONE WITH THE WIND*?

**FK:** There were three in all. George Cukor started the film and then was replaced by Victor Fleming. When Fleming had a nervous breakdown, Sam Wood took over the production. Even with all the problems, the set had a party feeling. The whole world knew about the film and we were all having a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

**SK:** Do you recall your first day on the Columbia lot?

**FK:** Oh, yes; I remember the first day I worked there. My agent, whoever it was, took me into Max Arnoff, who was the casting director. He took me immediately up to see Charles Vidor, who was going to make a picture called *THE LADY IN QUESTION*, to see if I would be the girl in that—well, not the girl, because Rita Hayworth was the girl.

**SK:** This was 1919. Was Rita Hayworth already the queen of the lot?

**FK:** No, no, she wasn't—it was just before she was queen of the lot, they didn't have much of anybody else, actually. She and Glenn Ford were going to play the love interest. That film was where I met Charles Vidor. We married, he was my husband. But before all that, he met with me and said, "Yes, she'll be fine." It turned out, he told me later, that he'd gone out onto the patio to see what my legs looked like as I walked away. And he said they had spirit! (Laughs)

**SK:** Legs with spirit?



**FK:** Legs

with spirit! (Laughs) That's why I got the oh-legs-with-spirit. I played Brian Aherne's daughter.

**SK:** Charles Vidor would go on to direct *GOING WITH THE WIND*, which was Rita Hayworth's most famous hit.

**FK:** Yes, and he made *COVER GIRL*, too. **SK:** What was the atmosphere at Columbia like, working for studio head Harry Cohn?

**FK:** Well, he was used to looking at all the people on his list as possessions. They were too. He was quite right, he owned everybody! Everybody was under contract—the writers, directors, producers, everybody! He was Big Daddy.

**SK:** He was rather an abrasive personality, wasn't he?

**FK:** I liked Harry Cohn! The kid that I was, then, liked him. I didn't have that many people to compare him to, at that point. I had DeMille, who directed me in *UNION PACIFIC*, and I knew Selznick, of course. That's who I knew in picture making. Harry Cohn was something else entirely from them. I don't think he had the education they had, certainly, but he was somebody who knew how to negotiate. Back then, everyone negotiated with the heads of the studios. Nowadays, it's people who have masters and degrees in finance, it's not the Harry Cohns. It's these guys with all their facts and figures and that's all it is, now, a business. Then, you had Harry Cohn, who was a street fighter.

**SK:** A tough little guy.

**FK:** Tough, but good. It was his studio and he cared about it. He was making pictures, but now it's a totally different business and you need, I guess, businessmen to run it.

**SK:** When you were under contract, was it a happy one?

**FK:** You were secure that you were going to work. When I look back, how are you going to learn your business if you don't work? So, although I don't think all those films I made were fine, it was still experience. I was active; I'd come to work and act.

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*Continued from page 56*

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The actress is perhaps better known for being married to famous men, such as directors John Huston and Charles Vidor, than being *Scarlett O'Hara's Younger Sister*, which just happens to be the title of her first book of memoirs, published in 1977. Having begun writing, she teamed up with Tab Hunter and started working on scripts for his production company and then actively trying to get them made. She also found time to have a regular column in the *Los Angeles Times*, bringing the current Hollywood scene under the scrutiny of a woman who has seen it all.

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**SS:** This was 1939. Was Rita Hayworth already the queen of the lot?

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**SS:** Charles Vidor would go on to direct *GILDA*, which was Rita Hayworth's most famous hit.

**EK:** Yes, and he made *COVER GIRL*, too.

**SS:** What was the atmosphere at Columbia like, working for studio head Harry Cohn?

**EK:** Well, he was used to looking at all the people on his lot as possessions. They were, too. He was quite right, he owned everybody! Everybody was under contract—the writers, directors, producers, everybody! He was Big Daddy.

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**SS:** A tough little guy.

**EK:** Tough, but good. It was his studio and he cared about it. He was making pictures, but now it's a totally different business and you need, I guess, businessmen to run it.

**SS:** So, you'd say the atmosphere at Columbia, when you were under contract, was a happy one?

**EK:** You were secure that you were going to work. When I look back, how are you going to learn your business if you don't work? So, although I don't think all those films I made were fine, it was still experience. I was active; I'd come to work and act.

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## ANN RUTHERFORD

*Continued from page 56*

Wally "The Fox" Benton. She's daydreaming Walter Mitty's unimaginative, sharp-tempered—well, maybe that's not such a good example.

Actress Ann Rutherford personified that ideal in her charming portrayal of Polly Benedict in the Hardy Family film series. She carried the mantle throughout her career. When I was asked to interview the Girl Next Door for *Scarlet Street*, I was intrigued to learn that she lived not next door, but just a few blocks from me. The connection between the actress and her still-potent image didn't end there. During our conversation, Ann Rutherford was charming, funny, honest—and became a true friend.

**Ann Rutherford:** I was born in Canada—in Vancouver, BC. I was not born in Toronto, as all the bios say. At the age of 17, the studio gave me a biography to fill out and I guess I was unusually silly, just being a teenager. I didn't like the name of where I was born. I liked the name of where my father was born, in Toronto, so I put down Toronto. And then it asked, "What is your religion?" and I put down "Druid." (Laughs)

**Scarlet Street:** And nobody questioned it?

**AR:** Nobody questioned it. It wasn't until many years later that I was flying into Vancouver and I looked down and saw all these fingers of land jutting into the sea, with all the greenery and the trees—and that was Vancouver. I fell in love with Vancouver. In my declining years, I've decided to tell the truth! (Laughs)

**SS:** Were you close with your father?

**AR:** I was until my mother and my father divorced. My father moved back to Canada. I don't remember ever seeing him again after that. We were living in San Francisco at the time, then my mother and sister and I moved to Los Angeles. My grandmother came to live with us and it was wonderful.

**SS:** How did you get your start in the motion picture industry?

**AR:** I was in radio when I was a kid. I lied my way into radio. I'd been kept after school and all my friends went roller-skating home without me. As I morosely skated home from school, I passed a radio

station KFAC on Wilshire Boulevard. My friends and I used to occasionally take our skates off and ride up in the elevator and sit quietly in a little viewing room that they had. I was already so late going home, anyway, it didn't matter to me if I was any later. I don't know what possessed me, but I thought, "If I had a job, I wouldn't have to go to that crummy school." I was 13. I sailed in and asked them at the desk where I should go to apply for a position. I said "I'm an actress."

**SS:** And had you ever actually acted?

**AR:** No, despite anything you've read—you're getting the truth from me, now. When we lived in San Francisco, my mother would take my sister and me to see a play every Saturday afternoon. I'd save the programs and my sister and I would discuss them, so we'd remember the names of the plays. Well, they sent me to see a man who must have been a card-carrying idiot—he was very young and he believed me. He asked, "What have you done?" and I named every show I could think of—even those that had no kids in them! (Laughs) He was quite impressed. He asked for my phone number and address and thanked me very much for coming in. He didn't ask me if I had an agent or anything that a professional would have asked. I went home and felt much better. I didn't tell anybody what I'd done—I had vented. I felt good. About a month later, I came home from school and my mother was awaiting me. She said, "Have you girls caused any trouble at KFAC?" I said, "No; why?" She said, "Oh, I was afraid you might have tapped on the glass while they were broadcasting." I said, "No, of course not; why?" She said, "They want you down there right away."

**SS:** That must have come as a shock.

**AR:** Well, I put my skates back on and I went whizzing down to KFAC. When I got upstairs, I saw two lines of kids—one of boys and the other of girls roughly my age. So, being of sound mind, I got in line with the girls and somebody came and handed me three pages. I'd seen enough shows that I had remembered when the actors turned their pages, they'd put their arms way out front of them. As soon as I got my pages, I pulled out a pencil and borrowed the shoulder

of the girl in front of me and made black lines under all of my lines. I had seen actors do that, too, and it didn't take a brain surgeon to guess that they were the words they were supposed to say. So, when it came my turn, they were very impressed that I'd underlined my lines—and when it came to turning pages, I dazzled them with my footwork, reaching out and carefully and slowly turning the pages, not making any noise. And by George, I got the job!

**SS:** What role did you win?

**AR:** It was a Saturday radio serial called NANCY AND DICK AND THE SPIRIT OF '76. It was sponsored by Broadway Department Store and the Daughters of the American Revolution. The boy who played Dick was a very fine actor who later became a director—Richard Quine. He was on Broadway eventually, and we both wound up at MGM. The girl he married, Susan Peters, was a tragic young actress, who was in ANDY HARDY'S DOUBLE LIFE. They were hunting and she put her gun down wrong—she became paralyzed for the four or five years of their marriage, and then died. He had a tragic life.

**SS:** So, your first job was in radio.

**AR:** I got involved in radio and I still had to go to that crummy school! (Laughs) But it was wonderful—it was a lot of fun! You could be somebody different every day! You'd be a crying baby or make noises like a pig—they were very pleased with any noises that I made; they worked them into the script. I did another series called CALLING ALL CARS, but NANCY AND DICK went on for three or four years on the radio.

**SS:** How did you move from radio to movies?

**AR:** One evening, I received a phone call at the station from a gentleman who'd seen a picture of me in the newspaper. He thought I looked quite like another actress, Anne Darling. She had, that very day, distinguished herself by eloping with a very important insurance executive who was much older than she, and who did not want her to work anymore. This gentleman who saw my picture was a retired agent, whose very good friend, Nat Levine, was producing a picture called WATERFRONT LADY. It's a marvelous title—you expect to see Mae West!





**PAGE 58 LEFT:** O'Hara sisters Suellen, Scarlett, and Carreen (Evelyn Keyes, Vivien Leigh, and Ann Rutherford) listen to their mother, Ellen (Barbara O'Neil) in *GONE WITH THE WIND* (1939). **PAGE 58 RIGHT:** Red Skelton clowns it up for Rutherford in *WHISTLING IN BROOKLYN* (1943). **LEFT:** For a change of pace, Rutherford was the nasty girl next door in *THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY* (1947), with Virginia Mayo, Danny Kaye, and Gordon Jones.

got the ob! Mr Lancaster, having been an agent, had the studio start me at \$150 a week, which I was dazzled with—it was a lot of money for 1935.

The very same

day, Mascot had signed a young man and his sidekick. The young man got \$100 a week and his sidekick got \$50. Those two people were Gene Autry and Smiley Burnette—so, for once in my life, I made more money than Gene Autry! I did *WATERFRONT LADY* and they put my name above the title. I was at Mascot for nine months and made 14 movies! (Laughs)

**SS:** They made them fast in those days!

**AR:** Very fast! My mother got a look at me and said, "My God, this child hasn't slept in nine months!" She took them to court and broke the contract—she said she lied about my age.

**SS:** You appeared in several Gene Autry Westerns.

**AR:** Four, including his first. I'm the only girl Gene ever married on the screen, and I'm the only girl he ever kissed. After that, he only kissed his horse!

**SS:** What was it like working with him?

**AR:** He was a darling guy and an absolutely brilliant businessman. He was smart enough to realize that, once you capture the affections of a child on the screen, you not only have them for their lives, but you'll have their children's affections, too. He and his wife used to file away his fan letters. When they were going to a town like Button Willow, California, with their horse in the trailer behind their car, they'd find the kids that lived in that town and call them up and put Gene on the phone. I've spoken to so many people who told me they were a big shot in their neighborhood when their friends found out that Gene Autry had telephoned them!

**SS:** MGM was quite a step up from Mascot.

**AR:** When I went to MGM in 1937, I had no idea I was living through the Golden Era. And MGM was the White House. They looked after you. Anything you wanted to learn, they'd see to it you had a teacher. If you cooperated with them, they'd knock themselves out. By cooperating, I mean present yourself to the public relations department and say, "I just finished a movie. What would you like me to do for you?" They'd get a

car and a driver and a photographer and publicity woman with a lap full of bathing suits or anything that might land you on the cover of a magazine. They'd drive you down to the beach and you'd change clothes in the back of

(Laughs) Now, I had heard about dirty old men who ask young women if they'd like to be in pictures. So I hung up on him. Meanwhile, he listened to the show and liked what he heard. He got out his telephone book and started calling Rutherford. He figured no one in their right mind would make up a name like Rutherford—it's too long for a marquee. Well, he started calling and, by George, my mother answered the phone. He was very gentlemanly and persuasive, so by the time I got myself home from the radio station, he was in my living room chatting with my mother! (Laughs) My mother was a good judge of people and she liked him. She said, "Honey, Mr. Lancaster is picking both of us up tomorrow morning and taking us to Mascot Studio, where you'll meet Mr. Levine."

**SS:** As simple as that!

**AR:** On the way there, Mr. Lancaster told me to say I was 18, because if you were younger they had to have a welfare worker on the set and a teacher, and that's very expensive for them. And they could only work a kid four hours a day. Well, I





one of those old-fashioned limos that had little roller blinds that pulled down. You did .eg art, Fourth of July art, Christmas art, Easter art—you hopped around with bunnies! Those were all the things that kept you in the public eye. The more you were seen in print, the easier it was to get the good jobs.

**SS:** Did you enjoy doing the publicity?

**AR:** I loved it! I never had a better time in my life!

**SS:** What kind of man was Louis B. Mayer?

**AR:** He was very good to all of us. He was very sweet. You had to hold your own with him. I started with MGM at \$350 a week, which in 1937 was a very distinguished price. Most of the kids that started there made \$50 a week, and then every six months their option would be picked up and they'd get a raise. From \$50, they'd go to \$75, then \$75 to \$100, and so it behooved them to improve and achieve. I remember a couple of my friends, tearful—they had a call from Mr. Mayer's office, saying he liked them and thought they could achieve something in the years to come, and that he'd like to raise their salary but the studio wasn't doing that well and he just couldn't afford it. He'd offer to pick up their option for whatever they were making. Some of the kids were very upset, because they were counting on getting a raise and they'd gone off and bought a new car or something.

**SS:** So they were over a barrel!

**AR:** When I heard this, I thought, "Oh, boy! Why hadn't he gone to their agent?" He hadn't gone through their agents for any of this—he'd go straight to the kids and get them to sign the contract. Now, I'd already done two Andy Hardy pictures and they took off like lightning. The studio never let you know how many fan letters you were getting. They didn't want you to know how popular you were, because you'd ask for a raise. But I knew from my agent how well those pictures were doing—Loews in New York wanted the studio to crank out four a year. We had some incredible writers and a wonderful producer, Carey Wil-

son—it was just a special property, the Hardy pictures.

**SS:** You were in a good bargaining position.

**AR:** I borrowed some money from my grandmother and some money from my mother. I deposited it in my bank book—I'd been socking away money—and I took it to work with me every single day. Finally, I got the call. I had to go up and see Mr. Mayer. Well, armed with my little book, I sat patiently and listened to Mr. Mayer. After listening to Mr. Mayer, I said the magic words. I pulled my bank book out, opened it to the total, and I slid it across to him. I don't know if he even read the numbers. As I held it in front of his face across his desk, I said, "Mr. Mayer, I'm going to have to leave here and go someplace where I can earn more than I'm earning now. I'm saving this up so I can buy a house for my mother and grandmother." And with that, he got very emotional. He was always very emotional—you'd ask him what time it was and he'd cry. Well, he just teared up, he was so proud of me. He said, "Don't you worry, honey, you just keep saving and buy your mother a house. And I always got my raise; he never, never called me in again about it."

**SS:** The family was always of paramount importance to Mayer.

**AR:** When I did this, it was before I knew what a nut he was about mothers! I realized later, when I was in the commissary, that everything was "Mrs. Mayer's Chicken Soup" and "Mrs. Mayer's Matzo Ball Soup" (Laughs) But at the same time, I always cooperated with the studio. If I wanted to go to New York, I'd have my agent schedule me for radio shows, and the Loews company would send somebody to take full-page photographs for the rotogravure section. New York had so many newspapers; they'd set up interviews with Walter Winchell or Radie Harris and all these characters. It was just wonderful—all I'd have to do would be to call the Loews of-

fice and they'd ask me what plays I wanted to see? Where would you and your mother like to stay? I always liked to stay at The Hampshire House. I never had a hotel bill. They'd send tickets for two staterooms for my mother and me, and we'd hop on a train and stretch out for two days and two nights until we got to Chicago. The Loews people in Chicago would meet the train and take us to lunch at the Club Room and then drop us off to go shopping at Nieman-Marcus, and then they'd pick us up and bring us back to the station and we'd take the 20th Century Limited into New York City.

**SS:** That sounds so exciting! No wonder you loved it.

**AR:** That's how I meet my brother-in-law. I was traveling with my mother and my sister. One of the gentlemen who met us at the airport was Al Simon. He worked for Loews as a greeter and, by George, he and my sister got married. He became a TV producer of shows that nobody liked but the public—BEVERLY HILLBILLIES, PETTICOAT JUNCTION, MR. ED, GREEN ACRES—and he created

the three-camera system for Lucille Ball. He produced the first two years of her show before he went off with Paul Henning and started a business, they co-produced together. Paul did all the writing and Al did all the producing.

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LEFT: Failing in his wedding reception business due to an ability to master the art of the ice-swan sculpture, Dr. Leon Kravaal (Karloff), *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* (1940), turns his technique toward freezing patients in the hope of curing cancer. Dr. Tim Mason (Roger Pryor) assists in the experiment while Pete Daggett (Ernie Adams), Sheriff Haley (Ivan Miller), and a state trooper (Bruce Bennett) shiver in anticipation. RIGHT: The naturally icy Stephen Danel (Peter Lorre) lords it over his wife, Lorraine (Rochelle Hudson), on the *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN* (1940).

#### COLUMBIA HORRORS

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nicely set the pattern for the films that followed, even if only *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* (1941) truly approached its level of creativity—and even surpassed it.

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*THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* was certainly economically-minded, but it comes across like a glossy super-production compared to its immediate successor, *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* (1940). This followup reteamed Karloff with director Nick Grinde and screenwriter Karl Brown, while bringing back Byron Foulger, Charles Trowbridge, and Stanley Brown, and bumping Roger Pryor up to leading man status. The screenplay is again reasonably sober-minded and grounded in what at least has the earmarks of genuine science. That, however, is something that worked better in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, since *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* is about on par with a Monogram offering in terms of production values and tone—to a degree that a touch of Monogram loopiness would not have been unwelcome. Actually, even Mono-

gram never quite came up with a movie so economically confined as this one. Once *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* gets underway, the action is primarily limited to two subterranean rooms and an “ice chamber,” none of which are likely to have taxed the production department.

There are marginal advances, not the least of which is the fact that the film was afforded a background score for some scenes. (The music used is almost entirely library track, some of which adorned *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*.) There’s also no denying that, confined though they are, the sets are generally more atmospheric than those in the previous film. Still, the overall tone—including, in addition to the library music, such staples as hidden rooms and secret staircases—is that of *Poverty Row*. The bizarre touch of Karloff’s Dr. Leon Kravaal (what was it with Karl Brown and these weird names with the double “a?”) having an island home that not only allows him to tunnel 100 feet into the earth without hitting water, but offers the convenient luxury of an “underground branch of a glacier” for purposes of experimenting with his theories of freezing therapy, also smacks of *Poverty*

LEFT: Peter Lorre vs. Ming the Merciless—Charles Middleton had the supporting role of Captain Cort in *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN*. RIGHT: Karloff comforts one of a seemingly endless string of distraught cinematic daughters. In this instance, it’s *BEFORE I HANG*’s Evelyn Keyes as Martha Garth. Former Tarzan Bruce Bennett stands by as her stalwart boyfriend, Dr. Paul Ames.





Peter Lorre had one of his best roles in Columbia's B thriller *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK* (1941). As Janos Szabo, the actor ran the gamut from cheery innocent to hardened criminal.

Row without quite succumbing to the sheer lunacy of the real thing.

One aspect that sets *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* apart from its not dissimilar Poverty Row cousins is that it takes its scientific premise very seriously—perhaps too much so. The basic “suspended animation” concept is certainly not farfetched. It’s even scientifically sound, up to a point. The problem is that it’s not all that exciting, either, and the film resorts to somewhat unconvincing melodrama to beef up the proceedings. Unlike *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, this offering never goes enjoyably over the top, nor does it allow Karloff free reign to indulge in flamboyant villainy. This is odd, because Leon Kravaal isn’t afforded even the token sympathy given to Dr. Savaard, and by all rights ought to be allowed to be evil incarnate. Certainly, the character is less visually appealing than the kindly Savaard. Made up to resemble nothing so much as Brember Wills’ Saul in *THE OLD DARK HOUSE* (1932), Karloff looks devilish—but, unfortunately, it stops at his looks. As scripted and played, Kravaal is merely, appropriately cold-blooded.

*THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* offers an almost carbon copy of the basic setup of its predecessor, but departs markedly from its model in terms of structure, offering a more detailed lead-in and a lengthy flashback in place of the first film’s headlong plunge into the narrative. When research scientist Dr. Tim Mason (Roger Pryor) inadvertently causes a furor by making his experiments in “frozen therapy” public, his superior, Dr. Harvey (Charles Trowbridge), sends him on a sabbatical far from the public eye. Mason takes this opportunity to go—along with his nurse/girlfriend, Judith Blair (Jo Ann Sayers)—in search of the records of Leon Kravaal, a reclusive scientist who pioneered the concept before disappearing 10 years earlier.

This section of the film—deliberately building up to the introduction of Kravaal, whom we know can be none other

than Karloff—is neatly accomplished. It trades heavily on the clichés of an unliked character who has drifted into myth, with all the trappings of locals who don’t even want to talk about the missing medico, but it does so with panache. “Well, I can tell you this much,” reveals the man (Ernie Adams) who rents Mason and Judith a boat, “Ten years ago, Dr. Kravaal, Ed Stanton—he was the sheriff—John Hawthorne, Doc Bassett, and young Bob Adams stepped into a boat on this very spot, and they rowed off to that island and they ain’t been seen since—none of ‘em.”

The exploration of Kravaal’s house and the accidental discovery of the hidden passage that leads to his secret laboratory are also effective. For that matter, there’s nothing wrong with the discovery of the long-frozen Dr. Kravaal in the “ice chamber,” nor with his rescue and amazing recovery. The flashback in which he tells Mason just how he came to be imprisoned in the ice isn’t bad, either, and boasts an almost certainly unintentional in-joke in casting Stanley Brown in the role of Bob Adams. Playing the nephew of a man being treated by Kravaal, Adams serves the same basic function as that of Betty Crawford, Ann Doran’s character in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*. He brings the law in because he suspects the doctor of bilking the old man (Lee Wilard) out of money for a non-existent cure and probably doing away with him. The in-joke? Brown, of course, had played Bob Roberts, the volunteer for Savaard’s experiment whose demise was brought about by Doran’s character in the previous film.

The writing, especially for Karloff, is particularly good in the flashback and very much in keeping with *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*. “I have given you my personal and professional assurance that Jasper Adams is alive and on the way to recovery. He placed his life unreservedly in my hands and I’m responsible only to him,” argues Kravaal when faced with charges of duplicity and possible murder. It’s an argument that works no better for Kravaal than it did



for Savaard, nor does Kravaal help matters by balking at allowing Dr. Bassett (Byron Foulger) to examine his patient. "No other doctor has been able to grasp the basic principles of what I'm doing. I explained it to the highest authorities in medicine and they scoffed at me. They called me insane" (Now, there's a forceful argument for being taken at one's own word if ever there was one!) Scoffed at once again, Kravaal is left no choice but to take his detractors to his island and let them examine the patient. Like Dr. Stoddard in the first film, Dr. Bassett takes one look at the apparently frozen corpse of Jasper Adams and declares Kravaal insane. What follows is a departure from formula—Kravaal is actually given the chance to revive Adams. Rather than do that, however, he prepares a poison gas for his tormentors. ("There's enough poison in this to kill a hundred men! The slightest jar will release its poisonous vapors.") When the gas is unleashed, he locks his "guests" in a secondary ice chamber before succumbing to the fumes himself in the first.

This much of the film is good, but immediately afterwards it runs into trouble by bogging down in Kravaal's attempts to duplicate the gas, which apparently allowed them all to survive being frozen for 10 long years. (Bob Adams destroys the original formula and is shot for his pains.) Even here, there are good pieces of business and some of Karloff's lines have a chillingly humorous tone, as when Dr. Bassett protests that Kravaal will need laboratory animals in order to test his gas and is quietly informed, "I have laboratory animals here." Similarly, when his first attempt results in the immediate death of the subject, he somewhat petulantly notes, "I suppose it was too much to expect success with the first experiment." Then, too, Kravaal's realization that his subjects are hanging in their dinner pails owing to having already been exposed to this gas in the past—"We need bodies with no poison in them!"—is a delightfully fiendish touch, since the only possible such bodies are inhabited by his rescuers, Mason and Judith.

Fine as these bits are, the last section of the film ultimately becomes dull and a little dreary—almost exactly the reverse of the problem of the rushed climax of *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*. Grinde does what he can with the atmosphere and often succeeds, but the cramped settings don't allow for the clever and interesting camerawork that had boosted the final stretch of the previous film. We're left with a story that merely slogs its way to a wholly predictable conclusion.

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While Karloff was dealing with the problems of human popsicles, Columbia was flirting with better establishing Peter Lorre as a horror star with the unabashed programmer *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN* (1940). The film isn't strictly speaking a horror picture and seems more like a less fanciful variant on 1932's *BEHIND THE MASK*, with Lorre taking over the old Edward Van Sloan role. Substitute slave labor and plain sadism for drug trafficking and medically-oriented sadism and you have much the same concept, with one notable difference: the villain is now at the forefront of the proceedings. In *BEHIND THE MASK*, Van Sloan's was a supporting role in a Jack Holt vehicle. In *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN*, Lorre is the above-the-title star and the hero is third-billed Robert Wilcox.

Despite an atmospheric opening, involving Mark Sheldon's (Wilcox) recruitment into the Department of Justice ("You're joining an army—an army where there are no banners, no medals for heroism, and death is the only honorable discharge") and his subsequent encounter with his short-lived partner, *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN* is rarely more than workmanlike. Director Charles Barton appears relatively unconcerned with anything like atmosphere. The most intriguing thing on a visual level are the film's peculiarly S&M oriented flogging scenes. Barton seems to delight in the scenes of Wilcox and Stanley Brown being stripped to the waists, hung from chains, and whipped.

(Poor Stanley Brown is on the receiving end of more abuse in these films than any other actor.)

A scene between Wilcox and Addison Richards is enjoyable and seemingly modeled on Fox's Charlie Chan movies. "You and I are going to try to smash the dirtiest racket any man ever invented," reveals special operative "46" (Richards), showing Sheldon (now, special operative "64") a map and explaining, "That is an island—Dead Man's Island, and a very good name for it, too. It's United States territory, but it's so small and so unimportant that nobody pays any attention to it, except for the man we're after. He owns it. Did you ever hear of a man by the name of Stephen Danel?" When Sheldon pleads ignorance, "46" colorfully explains, "Lincoln freed the slaves. Mr. Danel is back in the trade and doing very well at it, too." For some obscurely xenophobic reason, this prompts Sheldon to inquire as to Danel's nationality. "I don't know. It might be anything, but he's an American citizen now and that makes him our problem," says "46," mindless of the fact that the fellow being on American soil is more relevant than his nationality. "He deals in paroled men, convicts who think he's giving them a new start in life, but what they really get is a slow, living death," "46" concludes just as a shot comes through the window, killing him.

Here the film introduces Lorre as Danel in the guise of an innocent bystander, who, upon hearing of the murder, remarks, "Oh, but that's shocking, isn't it?" and reacts in mock horror when asked if he's ever seen a murderer before. It's a piffling bit of business, with Lorre in fine form, cleverly playing the scene so that the audience knows full well that he's up to no good, even if the characters in the film take him at face value. Unfortunately, the film then shifts to the predictable mechanics of the plot, involving Sheldon's arrest for the murder of "46," his imprisonment, and his unbelievably rapid parole into the keeping of . . . Stephen Danel, of course.

The one thing of real interest in *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN* is Lorre's suavely sadistic portrayal—and in one sense, that's quite enough. Decked out in a pith helmet and a double-breasted pongee suit, Lorre looks for all the world like his own Mr. Moto on one of his tropical adventures, but ultimately he's more of a svelte variant on Charles Laughton's Dr. Moreau from Paramount's *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS* (1933). When we first see Danel on his island in his dressy tropical kit, delicately fingering the lashes of a whip that's about to be administered to hapless parolee Eddie (Stanley Brown), it's clear that Lorre is in full villainous throttle with no concessions to audience sympathy. "I hope I'll hear good reports on your conduct hereafter," he drily notes, before going back to his house and his captive wife, Lorraine (Rochelle Hudson), to complain, "I had a very annoying afternoon."

The finale is a foregone conclusion. We all know that Sheldon will form an almost immediate romantic alliance with Lorraine and that he's going to bring Danel down. The film's charm lies in the details of Lorre's perfidy. The man is just plain nasty to everyone and everything, though he reserves his special venom for his servant Siggy's (George E. Stone) capuchin monkey, the sight of which invariably sends him into a rage. "Keep that monkey away from me!" he screams when we first see him encounter the little fellow. When he later finds that Siggy has the monkey in the kitchen, he explodes, "I told you I don't want the monkey in the house!" At last, he completely loses it, knocking the animal to the floor and blasting it with his pistol, bellowing at the horror-stricken Siggy, "Throw that thing out! Didn't you hear me?" It's a darkly funny performance of pure over-the-top meanness, though it looks as if Lorre was the only one actually in on the joke. There's no evidence that either screenwriter Robert D. Andrews, or director Barton were taking any of this pulp nonsense as anything other than straightforward melodrama. Lorre, on the other hand, is clearly having a fine time with it—and holds the film to-



**TOP:** Tortured Janos Szabo finds a few brief, precious moments of peace and happiness with Helen Williams (Evelyn Keyes), who is blind and cannot see *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK*—or, for that matter, the mask. **ABOVE:** Szabo seeks revenge against his old criminal gang in the film's searing climax.

gether accordingly. Unlike Bela Lugosi in his lower-rung outings, Lorre doesn't attempt to will the proceedings into something more substantial than they are, but rather exaggerates the character into fascinating caricature. In any other film, this might be damaging. Here, it's the primary saving grace.

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If Lorre was over-the-top in *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN*, Karloff was subtle almost to the point of being somnambulist in his next offering. In terms of production values, *BEFORE I HANG* (1940) is an improvement over *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES*, but in most other respects, it's not. The

approach is once again just about the same; only the order of the events has been shifted. The opening is a benign variation on the trial in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, even to the extent of casting Charles Trowbridge as the judge sentencing Dr. John Garth (Karloff in old-age makeup similar to his Dave Mallory character in 1937's *NIGHT KEY*). *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*'s exposition is reworked as events that occurred prior to the start of *BEFORE I HANG*, neatly placing all the film's setup in Garth's courtroom speech.

No sooner has the judge offered Garth the chance to address the court (the man obviously learned nothing from his experiences with allowing Boris to make courtroom speeches) than the doctor tells us all we need to know about the premise and the background. "It is true I am a murderer in the eyes of the law, but in my own heart, I am innocent. I have practiced medicine for many, many years, and I don't believe that anyone has ever questioned my sincerity or my devotion to my oath of service—yet here I stand, facing sentence for murder. I make no plea for mercy, but I feel it is my right and my duty for the sake of my daughter and those few in my own profession, like Dr. Paul Ames, who have come here to speak on my behalf, to say again before I am sentenced that what I did, I did because I knew of no other answer to the terrible problem my patient could not solve for himself. He suffered unendurable and ever increasing agony simply because old age had poisoned his body, and yet he could not die. I told my patient that perhaps I could cure the old age that was torturing him and he trusted me. He allowed me to inoculate him with a serum I had developed after many years of research, but I failed. I tried again and again and each time I failed. Finally, I confessed to him that it might be months—years—before I could perfect my serum and end his suffering. But his pain was too great. He begged me for the simple mercy of death. And I could do nothing else but help him to leave a world that had become a sleepless tortured nightmare to him."

It's a fine, moving speech—hundreds of miles away from the unhinged courtroom declarations in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*—and Karloff plays it so well that you're almost unaware of its expository nature. His subsequent remarks cleverly and briefly map out the film's direction—"I have only one thing more to say. I have always believed and I will go on believing until the end that someday, somehow medical science will find a way to end the needless, ghastly suffering caused by the ravages of old age. I pray that other men will go on working towards that goal I can no longer hope to reach."

The problem with this effective, sober opening is simple: it's too damned sober. Right from the onset, director Nick Grinde seems to have lost interest in making the film visually interesting. A simple comparison of this scene with the one in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG* attests to this. The clever shots using foreground objects are almost nonexistent, despite the fact that the chandelier Grinde used to this end in the first film is clearly in evidence at the top of the frame in a long shot. There's an overall feeling of "stand 'em up and shoot 'em" that robs *BEFORE I HANG* of visual impact. The real oddity is the fact that the film's deadly earnestness is in the service of a far more fanciful premise than those found in the first two films. Garth's goal of stopping—even reversing—the aging process lacks the scientific basis of the mechanical heart or the frozen therapy, and by the time it wanders into the realm of his serum being made with the tainted blood of a "three time killer," *BEFORE I HANG* loses any semblance of credibility. (One almost expects Edward Van Sloan, on hand as Dr. Howard, to intone, "The blood that was stolen from my prison was criminal blood!") Had the film itself been more excitingly done—even had Dr. Garth been a bit more flamboyant—this wouldn't matter so much, but the dull approach scuttles the fanciful story.



BEFORE I HANG. There certainly are some good things, not the least of which is the appearance of Edward Van Sloan in one final, large role in a horror picture. There's a certain perversely pleasant quality in seeing Karloff strangle Van Sloan one last time in those years after FRANKENSTEIN (1931). Also, some of the writing is good and Karloff is in good form. Nevertheless, after can manage a speech like, "The human life cell is born to live forever under the right conditions, but when they are combined in us to perform the normal functions of our bodies, they give off poisons which pile up a burden of decay which we call old age. So death becomes the price we pay for living." Karloff not only gets away with his concept that walks a vague borderline between science and metaphysical claptrap, but he also makes it sound convincing.

The film's prison sections work reasonably well. The bitter yet humorous lines afforded Karloff as he prepares to test his serum on himself just minutes before his proposed hanging, are deliciously unforced. Still, BEFORE I HANG never seems sure of its own intentions. Dr. John Garth is such a radical and seemingly deliberate departure from Doctors Savaard and Kravaal—note the difference between Garth's take on religion and Savaard's—that the character never seems remotely like a mad doc, or even an annoyed one. Even when Garth turns killer, there's no bravura villainy involved. The murderous Garth has no relation to the scientist. There are fine moments sprinkled throughout the film, such as Dr. Howard's realization of what has happened to Garth. ("John, what is wrong with you? There's poison in you—that murderer's blood!") Following his pardon, the encounter between Garth and his daughter (Evelyn Keyes) is an assured horror film moment, too. "You're so different that you used to be," she notes, and is told, "Sleeping or waking, ever since I came to myself in the prison hospital, I've been trying to remember, but . . . I was going to inoculate Dr. Howard and then . . . there's a curtain, a wall that I can't get through." At such moments, Karloff's ability to invest his characters with sympathy are in full sway.

Grande's interest in the proceedings picks up considerably once the film reaches its final third, taking on the camera placements of THE MAN THEY COULDN'T HANG and the moody lighting of THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES. Unfortunately, the script isn't entirely convincing on several key points. Since there's nothing all that alarming about Garth's demeanor until the "criminal blood" takes hold of him, it's hard to believe that not one of his old friends is even slightly interested in undergoing the treatment that stripped 20 to 30 years off his age. The film seems padded, devoting nearly two full minutes to Pedro Cordoba's mock piano playing, when the scene could have easily begun at the end of his recital. The film's climax, however, is very assured. If we overlook the tag scene that follows (and unusually grim, with Garth lurching back to the prison to ask the warden to hang him, only to end up shot to death by a guard played by Stanley Brown, who was perhaps evening the score for having been killed by Karloff in the two previous films).

BEFORE I HANG's best moment belongs to Don Beddoe as police Captain McGraw, who sizes up Garth by saying, "Dr. Garth's the first man I ever met who was ever polite to me and still make the chills run up and down my back." That's about the nearest summation of Karloff's villainy ever uttered onscreen.

In the end, BEFORE I HANG is definitely a lesser work, the weakest of Columbia's mad doctor films—and it marked the end of Hollywood as concerns the participation of both Grande and Karl Brown. Robert D. Andrews, who had written the actual script for BEFORE I HANG from Brown's story, stayed on as coauthor for the next entry, a film generally considered to be the best of the series and one of the classic horror films, THE DEVIL COMMANDS (1941).

Exactly one week before THE DEVIL COMMANDS opened, however, Columbia brought out what has to be one of its strangest horror pictures—Robert Florey's THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK (1941). In fact, calling this fine little film a horror picture isn't correct in the normal sense of the term. It's more a kind of incipient *noir* with horrific overtones, strangely reminiscent of the sort of film associated with Tod Browning. The storyline is typical of Browning, relying heavily on disfigurement and social outcasts of one kind or another—either those who are physically different, or are simply part of a separate world (in this case, gangsters). Florey's approach is anything but in the Browning mould, however, and is in keeping with the Expressionistic and experimental leanings that mark his more personal films. This time, however, there's something a little different, and it perhaps comes from the fact that Florey, like his main character, Janos "Johnny" Szabo (Peter Lorre), was himself a migrant and therefore more in tune with his material than usual. The result may not be Florey's best film, but it is second only to MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932) in that capacity, and outdistances even that in terms of emotionalism. THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK is the most completely human film in Florey's career. And it contains one of Peter Lorre's most memorable and carefully layered performances.

The plot traces the fortunes of Janos Szabo from the moment the ship bringing him from Hungary docks in New York to his grim death in the desert. It's a journey from hope to despair to hope and back to despair—all within a tight 66-minute running time that seems only slightly rushed toward the film's conclusion. While it's doubtful that THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK cost any more than Columbia's Karloff movies, Florey makes THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK look more expensive than it could possibly have been. Careful lighting, redressed sets from other films, judicious use of stock footage, elaborate montage effects—all are brought into play, but are done in such a manner that the cost-consciousness behind it is never apparent. The film is never less than cohesive; there's no sense of it being a patchwork job. An uneven, but invariably interesting director, Florey is at his best here—not in the least because its somber tone suited his style. THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK is blessedly free of the comic relief that mars MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE and THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS (1946)—a blessing, since nothing was less suited to Florey than comic intrusions.

Lorre's charmingly innocent Janos is a far cry from the sadistic Stephen Danel in his first Columbia horror, ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN. It's a brilliant performance that dettly skirts preciousness, never quite toppling into that trap by virtue of Lorre's ability to ground the character in human reality. And it's pretty much all Lorre's doing, since the compactness of the film requires generating a maximum amount of sympathy for Janos in a minimum of time.

Lorre is not, however, the whole show—THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK is very well acted by its supporting cast. It helps that the screenplay by Paul Jarrico and Allen Vincent (neither of whom are otherwise associated with Columbia's horror films) offers the actors more to work with than usual. Evelyn Keyes, who was utterly wasted in BEFORE I HANG, is here given a touching role as the optimistic blind girl who can "see" the real beauty in Janos. Don Beddoe, who had graced THE MAN THEY COULDN'T HANG, ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN, and BEFORE I HANG, and would later show up in THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU (1942), has a solid role as the police lieutenant who befriends Janos in the early portions of the film. Best of all, though, is character actor George F. Stone as Dinky, the lowlife who leads Janos to a life of crime with nothing but the best of intentions. Stone—who was on his

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EVELYN KEYES

(Continued from page 57)

SS: And you didn't have to worry that after the end of each picture, there wouldn't be another one?

EK: No, you didn't. All you had to worry about, really, was getting a good part. You could always get good parts.

SS: How did it feel when you saw yourself in the day's rushes?

EK: Well, it took a long time to get used to looking at myself. You have to go through that process, because you don't look like you think you do, and you certainly don't sound like you think you sound. The sound was the worst part. Normally, you hear your voice from the inside, so it doesn't sound like the sound coming to you. I said, "What's wrong when we hear our own voice, because it's so different?"

SS: Did it take you self-conscious at first?

EK: Yes, definitely. You can't even tell who that person is up there on the screen, because you can't see. I couldn't see who that per-

son was, and then I got used to it. Once you get past all that, it's the best way to learn. I think athletes do it now. They watch themselves on videotape. Somebody can tell you you're swinging too much or you're not swinging enough or your wrist is bent. They can tell you a million times what's wrong and how to do it and not get anywhere. But if you see the film, you can tell what you're doing wrong. You can take it all apart and put it together again. That's true in acting.

SS: Who did you admire in the business at that time? Did you use someone as a guideline for your own acting techniques?

EK: Jean Arthur. I used to look at her films over and over and I came out of her for a while. She had that crack in her voice. Well, I had that. I adopted that. It's okay to copy something, just so it's something good! (Laughs).

SS: In addition to *THE LADY IN QUEL* *FICTION*, Charles Vidor directed you in *LADIES IN RETIREMENT* and *THE DESPERATE*.

EK: Yes, I did. He having your husband in the picture? Did he have particular

goals for you?

EK: Nobody had a goal for me, including me. I should have, but nobody did and I just rattled along. Oh, Charles would put me in a picture because he wanted me to

be around. He did a Western because he wanted to do a Western. To show that he was all-American. That was *THE DECEPERADOES*, with Glenn Ford and Randolph Scott, and Claire Trevor.

SS: You also made two horror films—*BEFORE I HANG*, starring Boris Karloff, and *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK*, with Peter Lorre.

EK: *BEFORE I HANG* was the second picture I did at Columbia.

SS: What do you recall of Boris Karloff?

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SS: It was shot as *WIZARD OF DEATH*, but released as *BEFORE I HANG*.

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SS: You actually had a meatier role in *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK*, with Lorre.

EK: Well, I had to play a blind girl and so being gung ho about acting, I went down to the blind school and watched the blind people work, how they picked up things and moved around. That was what I remember most. I don't remember much about Peter Lorre on that picture. I got to know him better later, with the Bogarts. He was nice, he was funny, he was cute. He was charming and mischievous—I don't mean on the picture, because I was too uptight worrying about myself. It was later, with John Huston and the Bogarts, that Peter Lorre was fun to be around.

SS: Where did you see him?

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PAGE 66: Larry Parks (as Al Jolson) and Evelyn Keyes (as Julie Benson, a character based on Ruby Keeler) in *THE JOLSON STORY* (1946). LEFT: Joe Pendleton (Robert Montgomery) dies 50 years too soon and takes possession of a new body, much to the confusion and ultimate delight of Belle Logan (Keyes) in *HERE COMES MR. JORDAN* (1941). RIGHT: Helen Williams (Keyes) dies in an explosion meant for Janos Szabo (Peter Lorre) in *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK* (1941).

SS: In the films, Lorre appeared in Huston's *BEAT THE DEVIL*. Were you around during the filming?

EK: No, I wasn't. *BEAT THE DEVIL* never made sense. Nobody was paying the least attention—especially John. (Laughs) They never finished the script. John would just say, "Oh, come out of the window—or no, go in that way!" They never quite knew what they were doing!

SS: You must have enjoyed the stretch of playing a blind girl in *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK*, right?

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SS: You said nobody, including yourself, had very clear goals. But did you at least receive good advice?

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SS: In addition to the two horror films, you appeared in a fantasy film with a considerably higher budget—*HERE COMES MR. JORDAN*.

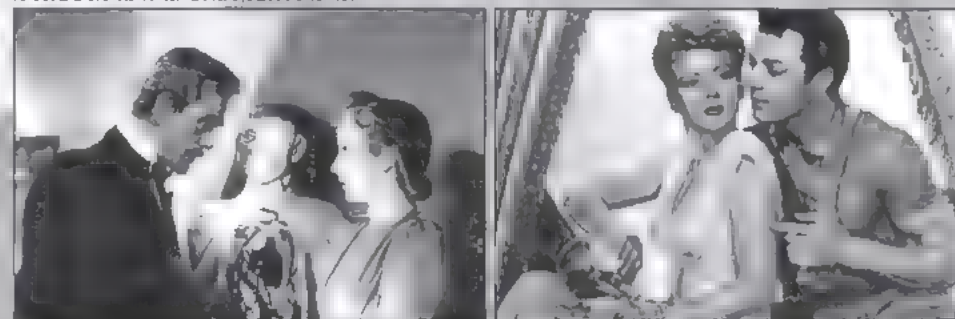
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SS: Montgomery was an arch-conservative, wasn't he?

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(Continued on page 80)

LEFT: Tainted by criminal blood, Dr. John Garth (Boris Karloff) menaces his loving daughter, Martha (Evelyn Keyes) in *BEFORE I HANG* (1940). RIGHT: Keyes played a very forties genie opposite Cornel Wilde (as Aladdin) in the lively *A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS* (1945).





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*Continued from page 57*

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#### COLUMBIA HORRORS

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way to being a standard fixture of horror in the United Blackie films, had also been in *ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN*, but the role of Dinky turned out to be something special. It all adds up to an unusually rich movie.

Structurally, *THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK* prefigures Universal's reworking of *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1943)—working on the concept of a nice guy forced into being something totally foreign to his nature when his face is badly disfigured (in this case, the result of a boarding house fire). The handling of Janos' disfigurement is a brilliant coup de cinema by Flory. The staging of the scene in which the bandages are removed after the fire is stunningly accomplished (and almost certainly was uppermost in Tim Burton's mind when he staged a similar scene in 1989's *BATMAN*), carefully keeping the viewer from seeing the horror we know is beneath those bandages for as long as possible. Why did we see it? Why did it hurt so much?

Flory finds when a nurse accidentally wanders into the room and gets an eyeful of his hideously scarred face. When we finally see him—at the same moment he sees himself in the mirror—Flory wisely gives us only the most fleeting glimpse of what he's become. This is shrewd on two levels, since a detailed study of the makeup shows that it's not too convincing, and not letting us see it too long also prevents us from getting used to the way Janos looks. Amazingly, Flory keeps this up for the remainder of the film whenever Janos isn't wearing his "mask"—actually an extremely unsettling makeup designed to look like a mask—by clever lighting and camera placement. Much like

the characters in the *Mad Doctor* films, Flory refuses to really look at Janos—or rather Flory won't allow us to do so, putting us in the same category as the people who won't look at him based on his face. ("My face makes no difference now. I can work with my hands.")

If not for Janos, who has broken things off with his sweetheart in Hungary and is about to throw himself into the river, meet up with Dinky that his fortunes begin to change. A man (John Dilton) asks Janos for a light and when he sees his face in the matchlight, drops his cigar and wallet and runs off in terror, prompting Dinky to come out of hiding, snag the wallet. ("I knew what you was thinking but it just happened. I was back there flipping a coin to see if I stopped you or if I wouldn't.") Unlike everyone else, Dinky is able to look at Janos. He can't understand why his friend would drive Janos to suicide, asking, "Whaddya get out of being dead? Lyin' in a grave ain't my idea of life." Unfortunately, Dinky's idea of living isn't very honest. He's a small-time crook who wants Janos to embark on a life of crime with him, something Janos' personal ethics will not allow—at least until it comes down to needing the money for a doctor to save Dinky's life. It turns out that Janos has a knack for crime. Dinky fantasizes him with the idea that enough money might buy him a new face from a plastic surgeon, and Janos (outfitted with the aforementioned mask as a temporary measure by the assistant surgeon while awaiting an examination by the chief surgeon) soon finds himself heading up a gang of successful criminals whose boss is in jail.

Lorre successfully makes the transition from innocent to slick gangster without batting an eye. His bearing and

tone are suddenly different, but not so markedly as to be jarring. However, when he confronts the former gang boss (James Seay) who wants to take over and tell him quietly "These were your boys," only to nine new, it's obvious that a major change has come over the sweet and gentle Janos. The sense of genuine menace is inescapable. The change threatens to become even more pronounced when Janos finally sees the chief surgeon (Frank Reicher), only to be told "The hospital's been destroyed and that means the blood supply is cut off. The nerves are dead."

Take notes: at this point—exiting the doctor's office—Janos meets the blind Helen Williams (Keyes). Her inability to see him at all but innate gentle kindness quickly break through the façade of hardness Janos has developed. Sometimes I wish I could see the world the way that you do, and he goes to quit the gang and move to a small town with her and start a new life. Unfortunately, the gang becomes convinced—incorrectly—that Janos has betrayed them to Lieutenant O'Hara (Beddoe) and, torturing Dinky, track him down in an effort to exact revenge by planting a bomb in his car. The bomb doesn't get Janos, but it does kill the music-loving Helen. ("I didn't mean to do anything wrong. Please. I just wanted some music.") His last hope for happiness destroyed, Janos embarks on a ghastly revenge/suicide scheme of his own.

The film's ending is powerfully grim, as Janos mauls himself and his gang (except for Dinky) in the desert to die of thirst. When it's protested that they can't stay in the desert, Janos calmly tells them "Yes, we can stay here. We're going to because we can't go away." When Dinky points out that they'll die, he merely agrees, "Yes, we'll die. Keep thinking, thinking. Your little brains are turning around and around in circles looking for a way out, but you will not have the courage to take a way out yourselves. Foolishly and vainly, you will hope, hope that somehow you will be saved and slowly you will surely die. But my sons, I have caused my pitiful end. I shall die, too. Shooting these scoundrels is worthless. Go ahead. It won't hurt as much as being alive, surrounded by my treacherous friends, and I won't have to wait as long as you." However, the ultimate grimness of the ending is also the path back to the Janos who first arrived in America—as evidenced by his note he leaves for O'Hara, thanking him for his kindness and returning love of life to a policeman once named him. It's a cruel, efficient, ultimately moving climax in one of the most unusual of the 15 titles of Columbia's efforts in the genre.

Unlike the earlier entries in Columbia's *Mad Doctor* series, *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* came with something of a pedigree, being based on William S. Maister's novel, *The Edge of the Water* (1939). While the novel can hardly be said to have slavishly followed, it provided a more solid narrative backbone than was offered by the first three screenplays—and a far more flat-out horror-oriented one. Replacing Grinde with former film editor and then journeyman director Edward Dmytryk was an inspiration. *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* was his fourth of five movies that year, sandwiched in between a *Lone Wolf* and a *Boston Blackie* program, and while this wasn't necessarily a step up, it obviously offered Dmytryk material that was more in his line. Dmytryk's approach was immediately different from Grinde's. His film opens in full-throttle horror mode, using every device at his disposal to evoke a nearly perfect horror-

picture atmosphere. Indeed, he perhaps goes too far, since Ann Blair's (Amanda Duff) narration is filled with overripe, large & inessential and sometimes mildly humorous commentary. "In Barsham Harbor on nights like this when lightning rips the night apart, why do people close the shutters that face my father's house and whisper? Why are they afraid?" she asks, while the film shows us the creepiest of creepy old dark houses in the midst of a wild thunderstorm. Hell, is it any wonder the locals are afraid? To make matters worse, she virtually explains their fears—"No one goes near my father's house. No one dares. I don't know where my father is. I only know that for one brief, terrible moment, he tore open the door to whatever lives beyond the grave." This reservation to one side, *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* is easily the most completely horrific and successful of the *Mad Doctor* series.

This time out, Karloff plays Dr. Julian Blair, probably the most normal of his mad medicos—at least in the beginning. Unlike his previous scientists—respected or not Blair isn't a lone-wolf researcher, but rather part of a university teaching staff, and his experiments are neither far-fetched, nor even slightly threatening. When first we meet him, he's simply demonstrating his somewhat primitive—and suitably creepy-looking—device for recording brainwaves to a respectable and respectful assemblage of his colleagues. It's all perfectly scientific and above board, which perhaps affords it a certain weightiness lacking in the earlier entries. Certainly, it makes the shift in tone more striking and dramatic.



One of the film's strengths—something not fully appreciated in these early scenes, since it's only as the film unfolds that much that's unusual and inventive becomes apparent. This includes the introduction of Blair's wife, Helen (Shirley Warde), which will later be visually cross-referenced with the entrance of his daughter. Moreover, a very different aspect of Blair—and one not generally (if at all) appreciated—is established in this opening scene, when it reveals that Helen's brain-wave patterns are stronger and more pronounced than those of Blair's assistant Dr. Richard Sayles (Richard Lasker). In subsequent dialogue, it's revealed that this is not in question but that the brainwaves of even a woman—the second weaker sex—have proven to have this same quality. Not surprisingly, the fact that this is not in question is a capital fact—out, taken in the overall context of the film, it be-



# COLUMBIA HORRORS

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way to being a standard fixture as Runt in the Boston Blackie films, had also been in ISLAND OF DOOMED MEN, but the role of Dinky turned out to be something special. It all adds up to an unusually rich movie.

Structurally, THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK prefigures Universal's reworking of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1943)—working on the concept of a nice guy forced into being something totally foreign to his nature when his face is badly disfigured (in this case, the result of a boarding house fire). The handling of Janos' disfigurement is a brilliant coup de cinema by Florey. The staging of the scene in which the bandages are removed after the fire is stunningly accomplished (and almost certainly was uppermost in Tim Burton's mind when he staged a similar scene in 1989's BATMAN), carefully keeping the viewer from seeing the horror we know is beneath those bandages for as long as possible. Why did she scream? Why is that mirror covered? cries Janos when a nurse accidentally wanders into the room and gets an eyeful of his hideously scarred face. When we finally see him—at the same moment he sees himself in the mirror—Florey wisely gives us only the most fleeting glimpse of what he's become. This is shrewd on two levels, since a detailed study of the makeup shows that it's none too convincing, and not letting us see it for long also prevents us from getting used to the way Janos looks. Amazingly, Florey keeps this up for the remainder of the film whenever Janos isn't wearing his "mask"—actually an extremely unsettling makeup designed to look like a mask—by clever lighting and camera placement. Much like

the characters in the film, we cannot bring ourselves to really look at Janos—or rather Florey won't allow us to do so, putting us in the same category as the people who won't give him a job based on his face. ("My face makes no difference how I can work with my hands!")

It isn't until Janos, who has broken things off with his sweetheart in Hungary and is about to throw himself into the river, meets up with Dinky that his fortunes begin to change. A man (John Dilton) asks Janos for a light and when he sees his face in the matchlight, drops his cigar and wallet and runs off in terror, prompting Dinky to come out of hiding to snag the wallet. ("I knew what you was thinking before this happened. I was back there flipping a coin to see if I stopped you or if I wouldn't.") Unlike everyone else, Dinky is able to look at Janos. He can't understand why his plight would drive Janos to suicide, asking, "Whaddya get out of being dead? Lyin' in a grave ain't my idea of life." Unfortunately, Dinky's idea of living isn't very honest. He's a small time crook who wants Janos to embark on a life of crime with him, something Janos' personal ethics will not allow—at least until it comes down to needing the money for a doctor to save Dinky's life. It turns out that Janos has a knack for crime. Dinky tantalizes him with the idea that enough money might buy him a new face from a plastic surgeon, and Janos (outfitted with the aforementioned mask as a temporary measure by the assistant surgeon while awaiting an examination by the chief surgeon) soon finds himself heading up a gang of successful criminals whose boss is in jail.

Lorre successfully makes the transition from innocent to slick gangster without batting an eye. His bearing and



tone are suddenly different, but not so markedly as to be jarring. However, when he confronts the former gang boss (James Seay) who returns to take over and tells him quietly, "These were your boys. They're mine, now," it's obvious that a major change has come over the sweet and gentle Janos. The sense of genuine menace is inescapable. The change threatens to become even more pronounced when Janos finally sees the chief surgeon (Frank Reicher) only to be told, "There's hardly anything for the graft to adhere to. You see, the muscles have been destroyed and that means the blood supply is cut off. The nerves are dead."

Fate intervenes at this point—exiting the doctor's office, Janos meets the blind Helen Williams (Keyes). Her inability to see him and her innate gentle kindness quickly break through the façade of hardness Janos has developed ("Sometimes I wish I could see the world the way that you do"), and he opts to quit the gang and move to a small town with her and start a new life. Unfortunately, the gang becomes convinced—incorrectly—that Janos has betrayed them to Lieutenant O'Hara (Beddoe) and, torturing Dinky, track him down in an effort to exact revenge by planting a bomb in his car. The bomb doesn't get Janos, but it does kill the music-loving Helen ("I didn't mean to do anything wrong. Please... I just wanted some music"). His last hope for happiness destroyed, Janos embarks on a ghastly revenge/suicide scheme of his own.

The film's ending is powerfully grim, as Janos maroons himself and his gang (except for Dinky) in the desert to die of thirst. When it's protested that they can't stay in the desert, Janos calmly tells them, "Yes, we can stay here. We're going to because we can't get away." When it's pointed out that they'll die, he merely agrees, "Yes, we'll die. Keep thinking, thinking... your little brains are turning around and around in circles looking for a way out, but you will not have the courage to take the way out yourselves. Foolishly and vainly, you will hope... hope that somehow you will be saved and slowly you will surely die. For my sins, I have caused my punishment. I shall die, too." Shooting their executioner is worthless—"Go ahead. It won't hurt so much as being alive—surrounded by my treacherous friends—and I won't have to wait as long as you." However, the utter grimness of the ending is also the path back to the Janos who first arrived in America, as evidenced by the note he leaves for O'Hara, thanking him for his kindness and returning five dollars the policeman once loaned him. It's a powerful, effective, ultimately moving climax to one of the most unusual and finest of Columbia's efforts in the genre.

Unlike the earlier entries in Columbia's Mad Doctor series, *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* came with something of a pedigree, being based on William Sloane's novel *The Edge of Running Water* (1939). While the novel can hardly be said to have been slavishly followed, it provided a more solid narrative backbone than was offered by the first three screenplays—and a far more flat-out horror-oriented one. Replacing Crane with former film editor and then journeyman director Edward Dmytryk was an inspiration. If *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* was his fourth of five movies that year, sandwiched in between a Lone Wolf and a Boston Blackie programmer, and while this wasn't necessarily a step up, it obviously offered Dmytryk material that was more in his line. Dmytryk's approach was immediately different from Crane's. His film opens in full-tilt horror mode, using every device at his disposal to evoke a nearly perfect horror-

picture atmosphere. Indeed, he perhaps goes too far, since Ann Blair's (Amanda Duff) narration is filled with overripe, largely inessential, and sometimes mildly humorous commentary. "In Barsham Harbor on nights like this when lightning rips the night apart, why do people close the shutters that face my father's house and whisper? Why are they afraid?" she asks, while the film shows us the creepiest of creepy old dark houses in the midst of a wild thunderstorm. Hell, is it any wonder the locals are afraid? To make matters worse, she virtually explains their fears—"No one goes near my father's house. No one dares. I don't know where my father is. I only know that for one brief, terrible moment he tore open the door to whatever lives beyond the grave." This reservation to one side, *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* is easily the most completely horrific and successful of the Mad Doctor series.

This time out, Karloff plays Dr. Julian Blair, probably the most normal of his mad medicos—at least in the beginning. Unlike his previous scientists—respected or not—Blair isn't a lone-wolf researcher, but rather part of a university teaching staff, and his experiments are neither far-fetched, nor even slightly threatening. When first we meet him, he's simply demonstrating his somewhat primitive—and suitably creepy-looking—device for recording brainwaves to a respectable and respectful assemblage of his colleagues. It's all perfectly scientific and above board, which perhaps affords it a certain weightiness lacking in the earlier entries. Certainly, it makes the shift in tone more striking and dramatic.



The cleverness of the film's structure is something not fully appreciated in these early scenes, since it's only as the film unfolds that much that is unusual and inventive becomes apparent. This includes the introduction of Blair's wife, Helen (Shirley Ward), which will later be visually cross-referenced with the entrance of his daughter. Moreover, a very different aspect of the film—and one not generally (if at all) appreciated—is established in this opening scene, when it reveals that Helen's brain wave patterns are stronger and more pronounced than those of Blair's assistant, Dr. Richard Sayles (Richard Fiske). In subsequent dialogue, it's revealed that this is not unique to Helen, but that the brain-waves of every woman ("the so-called weaker sex") have proven to have this same quality. Nothing is especially made of this—it's simply tossed off as a casual fact—but, taken in the overall context of the film, it be-



LEFT: Director Nick Grinde sets up a shot of Boris Karloff, Roger Pryor, and Jo Ann Sayers in *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* (1940). RIGHT: Karloff reads the funnies to Larry Simms, better known as "Baby Dumpling" in Columbia's popular *BLONDIE* series.

comes markedly significant. Perhaps no horror film of the golden age features such an array of strong women as *THE DEVIL COMMANDS*. Helen is merely the first, and like the other two major female characters—Ann Blair and Mrs. Walters (Anne Revere)—she is clearly and quickly in charge of Dr. Blair. In fact, Helen, Mrs. Walters, and, to a lesser extent, Ann all possess stronger characters than does the film's actual lead figure. What's so surprising is that this has never caused a backlash against the film by many of the more reactionary factions of horror fandom.

The plot itself is propelled by Helen's death in a car wreck and Blair's subsequent desire to go beyond the grave to talk to her. This can very easily be read as an expression of Blair's utter dependence on his wife as much as his devotion to her. When he stumbles into his laboratory and mindlessly flips on the machinery after her funeral, it's more the action of a man who simply doesn't know what to do than it is that of a man suffering from grief. Blair only perks up when he finds that his dead wife's brain-waves are registering on the graph, prompting him to ill-advisedly tell his daughter, "Ann, dear, your mother is not dead—not really. She's come back to me. No, dear, I haven't lost my mind. She's here—here in this room. She still lives . . ."

Failing to convince her, he tries his story on his brother scientists. "I can only tell you again that I turned on these motors it was simply because I had to be doing something," he explains (forgetting to mention that, if he hadn't, there'd be no story). "I wasn't trying to reach my wife. I had no reason to believe that I could reach her. But she tried to reach me! There is the proof of something the world has always wanted to believe—the proof of life after death!" (Much as in *THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG*, the film inhabits an apparently secular world that doesn't accept the idea of an afterlife as part of a religion.) The graph doesn't entirely impress the scientists, and Blair's pronouncement, "Now I know there is a way for the dead to talk to the living," only serves to unleash their concerns about what evil may lurk beyond the veil of death. It's the sort of reaction perfectly designed to turn a respectable scientist into a raging Janos Rukh—and that's a fairly close approximation of what happens. However, *THE DEVIL COMMANDS*, while affording Karloff some choice melodrama, never allows Dr. Blair to become utterly unhinged in quite that manner; rather, it utilizes the actor's mad doc

shock as perfectly judged punctuation. The results are one of Karloff's most interesting performances, because of the unusual range it gives him, blending rational scientist and mad doctor with elements of knowing savvy (the scene where he unmasks Mrs. Walters is a delight) and an unwavering sense of sympathy.

The film is similarly smart in the way it moves from pure science to the more horrific. No sooner has Blair been accused of wanting to meddle in things that man must leave alone than his servant, Karl (Ralph Penney), convinces him to pay a visit on a spirit medium, Mrs. Blanche Walters. ("That night my father met Mrs. Walters and then for him there was no turning back.") Anne Revere's Mrs. Walters is a wonderful character—the actress plays her like Mrs. Danvers in search of a Rebecca—and quite unique to the series. It's the only time that Karloff shares the honors with what amounts to a costar in the serious series entries (*THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU* being something else again). For that matter, it's one of the few instances in a movie of its era that allows for a totally ruthless female villain—and Mrs. Walters is nothing if not ruthless.

Blair is totally unimpressed by the woman's supposed mediumistic powers. "I'm quite sure I can duplicate every trick you've done here tonight," he drily informs her, before showing Karl just how the woman conjured up his mother's ghost. One thing, however, does perplex him—"How do you handle the wiring for that table? I experienced a severe electrical shock during the séance of dangerously high voltage." When Mrs. Walters denies ever using electrical shock in her work, Blair concludes that she may herself be generating the electricity from her brain and might therefore be the key to his experiment. He persuades the utterly venal woman ("I'm not in this for my health") to go to his laboratory for tests, telling her, "It may be that you're closer to real communication with the dead than you ever believed."

Tests prove that not only does she generate electricity, but she can absorb amazingly large amounts of it. (Dynamo Dan in 1941's *MAN-MADE MONSTER* has nothing on Mrs. Walters.) With alarming coolness, she finally demands to know what Blair has in mind. He tells her—"I believe that, if I could change the hookup on that recording machine so that instead of recording your brain waves, I could utilize the energy output and receiving field of an abnormally sen-



sitized human being—like you, for instance—I could bring in that impulse so strongly that I could record it constantly and perhaps learn to read its message. Eventually, I may bring back my wife's actual voice and show the world how to talk to those who've passed beyond the grave." It may not make a lot of sense, but that doesn't bother Mrs. Walters, who only sees the idea in terms of money and power. She quickly responds, "If you can do what you're trying to do, you'll own the world."

At this point in the narrative, Mrs. Walters fully comes into her own, her mercenary ruthlessness standing completely in the open, as she takes charge of the situation—and Blair. No sooner does an accident befall Karl—one that leaves him a simpleminded mute (not that he was brightest crayon in the pack to begin with) and threatens to hinder the experiments if it becomes known publicly—than she railroads Blair into taking themselves and Karl ("The world can get along without him") to a more secluded environment. This turns out to be the old dark house of the film's opening.

"People in Barsham Harbor didn't understand my father," Ann's narration tells us, as if this is somehow surprising. "They began to talk about him. Slowly they began to fear him and then to hate him without really knowing why. Their poisonous hate spread through the village. No one would even speak to him, although he had never hurt any of them. You must remember that—my father never hurt a living person in Barsham Harbor." Despite the unconscious humor, melodrama, and obvious setup, this is an instance in which the narration is close to being on the money. Taken in conjunction with what we subsequently learn, that last line—"my father never hurt a living person in Barsham Harbor"—while not strictly true, takes on an effectively creepy resonance.

While the Barsham Harbor scenes are what most people remember about *THE DEVIL COMMANDS*, they really only contain three key set-pieces involving Blair's experiments. The film succeeds in making the viewer think he's seen much more elaborate horrors than are truly there. It's almost entirely a case of pure atmosphere—something Dmytryk understood far better than Grinde ever had—and part of it is communicated in an almost self-mocking and savvy manner. When the Barsham Harbor scenes begin, we find the attitude toward Blair well-established, with Sheriff Willis (Kenneth MacDonald) on his way to talk to Blair about the attitude of the townsfolk and the peculiar coincidence that there have been "five bodies missing in the two years since you people came to town." No sooner does Willis enter the house than he inquires, "How does it happen you don't have electricity?" "Mrs. Walters says it interferes with the reception," housekeeper Mrs. Marcy (Dorothy Adams) answers matter of factly. The response slyly winks at the knowledgeable genre fan—the lack of electricity is because oil lamps are much more atmospheric. Besides, the house most certainly must have electricity to power the banks of electrical equipment used in the experiments!

Much has changed about Blair in the intervening two years. He's become more the glassy-eyed traditional mad scientist, refusing the sheriff admittance to his lab and remarking, "This is not the first time I've been made the victim of people who talk too much about things they're too ignorant to understand." What is most singular is that Blair is not consistently in this mode—his humanity still exists beneath the surface, as is evidenced when Mrs. Marcy is accidentally killed in his lab and it becomes necessary to stage an "accident" to explain her death. ("I took care of the footprints," announces Mrs. Walters, coolly showing the mud-caked shoes she used to make it look like their victim fell off a cliff.) More interesting still is the fact that Blair only takes this attitude in the presence of Mrs. Walters. When he

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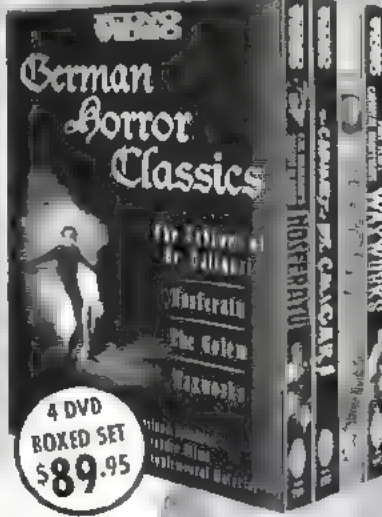
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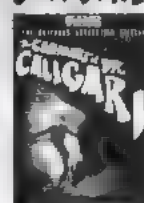
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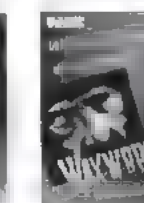
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# Disney's Unburied Treasures

Reviews by Ross Care, Barry Monnick, and Richard Valley

Disney's much anticipated **SILLY SYMPHONIES** (\$32.99) set is the most extensive of the Disney Treasures DVD releases yet released. The generous five-hour running time provides a thorough—if by no means exhaustive—overview of the prolific series that saw Disney animation evolve from the unrefined black-and-white shorts of the late 1920s to the polished Technicolor fantasies of the late 1930s. A companion series to the more popular (and plot, gag oriented) Mickey Mouse cartoons, the Sillys were conceived to give music more freedom to develop, and were thus proving grounds for techniques, both musical and visual, that led to the first animated features. Each Silly explored music and narrative in a unique way, and each featured new storylines and characters. Formats ranged from relatively plotless divertimentos to tight, feature-like scenarios, some original, some based on classic fairy tales, myths, and fables.

While the Symphonies became progressively less Silly as Disney moved towards his first features, I have a special fondness for the crude but inspired whimsy of the earliest shorts. **SKELETON DANCE** (1929), the first Silly and based on the tone poem, "Dance Macabre" (but without Saint Saens) is included in the set, and Carl W. Stalling is even given a title credit for his score. There are several other wonderful black-and-white shorts from this same period. The 1931 **UGLY DUCKLING** makes an interesting comparison to the 1939 remake, but maintains a charm and poignancy of its own, made all the more potent by its piquant "birth of cinema" naivete. The hen and chicks who at first reject the pathetic duckling also show up in **BIRDS OF A FEATHER** (1930), which opens with a popular Silly stratagem, a musical divertimento (to Offenbach, no less), but climaxes with another standard thirties Disney ploy, mobilization, in this case by the titular birds who rally to rescue one of the chicks from a threatening chicken hawk. (Much of the charm of the first Mickeys and Sillys is due to the unique animation of Ub Iwerks, who soon—temporarily—left Disney.)

Possibly the most astonish-

ing early toon is **EGYPTIAN MELODIES** (1931), an amazing piece of pioneering *cinéfantastique* in which a personable spider descends into the depths of a pyramid to witness a musical spectacle performed by mummies and animated hieroglyphics, all introduced by the spider's Jolsonesque "Mummy!". Both the opening descent and the climactic chariot race/battle scene feature some of the most amazing animation in early Disney, the opening shots in particular evoking the slicker but not necessarily more impressive effects of contemporary computerized visuals.

From the cornucopia of later Symphonies many polished gems are included. **MUSIC LAND** (1935) is a Romeo and Juliet parody about the birth of symphonic jazz, in which all the characters are voiced by musical instruments. Leigh Harline's inventive score climaxes with a musical battle between his own jaunty pop orchestrations and Wagner played on a Gothic pipe organ! **WOODLAND CAFE** (1937) is a charming minimusical set in a bugtown nightclub, a highlight of which is animator Ward Kimball's Cotton Club grass rapper (get it?) band performing a slowed cut version of "Everybody's

Truckin'!" The dreamlike **WYNKEN, BLYNKEN AND NOD** (1938), while a tad saccharine (as well as graphically displaying Disney's notorious penchant for bare-bottom humor), is still amazing for its special effects and color styling, evoking the later **FANTASIA** (1940). But for pure poetry and atmosphere, **THE OLD MILL** (1937) contains some of the loveliest prefeature animation and music, and a stunning storm finale. There are also a few duds in the set, including the generic, aptly titled **JUST DOGS** (1932), and the rather awful **GOLDEN TOUCH** (1935), in which King Minos is reduced to begging for a hamburger—but on the whole it's a varied and well rounded selection.

Supplemental material includes host Leonard Maltin speaking with songwriter Richard Sherman. There is some discussion of how Walt wrenched all this wonderful music out of his musical staff, but little reference is made to any of the composers who actually created the songs and scores, and Leigh Harline (who composed the most brilliant Symphony scores) is never cited at all! In this case, the corporation's ongoing disregard for the contributions of Harline (who perhaps incurred the everlasting wrath of the gods by jumping ship after winning two Oscars with his score for **PINOCCHIO** in 1940) is a sad omission, especially in view of the fact that no credits are attached to any of the Symphonies after **SKELETON DANCE**.

The best extra is a gallery of design/merchandising art, posters, and studio photos, one of which shows Disney with composers Harline and Frank Churchill—who are, however, identified only as Disney's "music staff." There are also some beautiful background paintings from the sumptuously designed **MUSIC LAND**, and fascinating period photos of Symphony merchandising displays and vintage theaters showing the shorts. And if you push the right menu buttons, you'll also find footage of Uncle Walt introducing various Sillys on a **WONDERFUL WORLD OF COLOR TV** show. Also of interest is Maltin's congenial interview with archivist David Smith who displays a cross-section of Symphony memorabilia from the thirties.

Curiously, the minimal liner material comments that this collec-







PAGE 72: SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS (1937) featured a memorable villain in the evil Queen who becomes a poisoned-apple-selling old crone. LEFT: THE THREE LITTLE PIGS (1933) was the most famous SILLY SYMPHONY cartoon, a Depression-era audience knowing well what it felt like to have the Big Bad Wolf at the door. RIGHT: The Prince and the Seven Dwarfs gather around Snow White's glass coffin. BELOW Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck are evicted in MOVING DAY (1937).

tion is "uncensored," though the Big Bad Wolf's Jewish parody in THE THREE LITTLE PIGS (1933) is still replaced by the usual obviously later footage. On the plus side, an outrageously fey Cupid is still seen among the various movie star parodies in the rather unDisneyesque WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN? (1935). Also, the postcard copy of the original 1932 FLOWERS AND TREES poster erroneously states that it is "the very first Silly Symphony." Perhaps it was meant to say the very first Technicolor Silly Symphony, which is true.

At any rate, the *raison d'être* of this set is the films themselves. Whether or not the wonderful Sillys are indeed "Walt's Most Cherished Works," they are certainly among his most historic, original, and astonishing, and make this collection indeed one to be cherished.

For a continuing history of Disney in the thirties, another two-disc set, the Platinum Edition of Disney's first animated feature, 1937's SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS (\$29.99), is essential. Along with the Silly Symphony collection, SNOW WHITE further chronicles the amazing epoch in which the Disney studio rapidly progressed from the early shorts to the first animated features.

Aside from providing a beautifully restored print of the original film and a plethora of extras, this set is state of the art DVD production and a crash course in getting around within the new technology. Included are outtakes and production art, the latter set up in virtual galleries that can be selected, toured, and then variously viewed by using the angle control on your remote. The deleted scenes are mostly pencil roughs, including a song, "Music in Your Soup," and a sequence in which the dwarfs build a bed for Snow White (which was, incidentally, an episode mysteriously included in the original Little Golden Book edition of the film).

There is also, however, one discarded scene of the transformed queen at her cauldron, which is seen in all its fully-animated, inked, and painted Technicolor glory. I especially enjoy studying the amazing downward pan of the Queen descending into her dungeon in slow motion, which offers the chance to savor both the flowing animation itself—that cape!—and the subtle horrific details that fly by at normal speed. (Indeed, at any point in the film, slow motion reveals each frame as a detailed work of art, and the actual transformation sequence becomes an *outré* study in abstract filmmaking.) The Queen herself—a kind of morph of Helen Gahagan in SHE (1935) and Gale Sondergaard in practically anything—remains one of the arch Disney villains; her scenes vividly capturing the mythic cruelty of the Grimm original.

For the kiddies, there's also a virtual Disneyland "Dopey's Wild Mine Ride" site, and for elders a somewhat mundane music video with Barbra Streisand (Her voice, anyway—the sequence is clips from the film stitched together with digital effects.) This is not as left-field as it sounds, since Streisand has always been an aficionado of Disney music. A Disney/Churchill selection, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf," was heard on her very first Columbia LP, and Harline's "I've Got No Strings" (from PINOCCHIO) appeared on "My Name Is Barbra."

A hidden gem in this SNOW WHITE treasure mine is a 1934 Silly Symphony, THE GODDESS OF SPRING, a Disney version of the Rape of Persephone myth, and a pivotal landmark in the studio's march toward feature animation. With its two human leads and bevy of sprites and demons (not to mention its death-and-resurrection subtext, which I explored in my Disney RECORD RACK column in *Scarlet Street* #27), GODDESS is emphatically a concentrated dry-run for SNOW WHITE. Seeing the flaccid rubber-hose look of Persephone as she trips through the

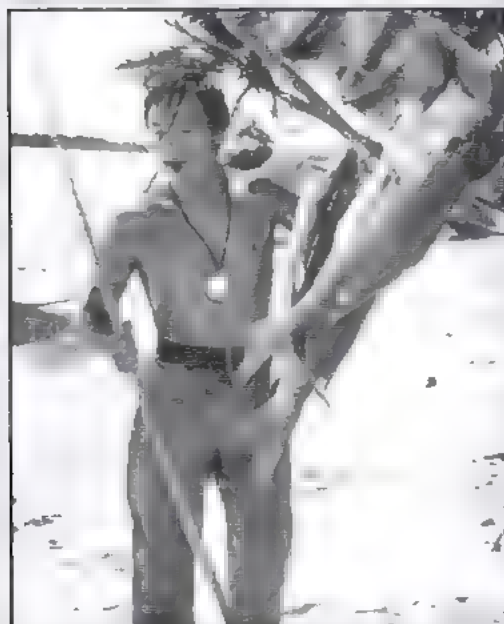
opening scene, one can well understand why Disney ultimately relied on Rotoscoping for human animation, but the elaborate production number in Hades ("Hi-De Hades") vividly anticipates the fantastic, free-form mode of the "Bald Mountain" sequence in FANTASIA. Virtually an anointed miniopera (and ostensibly an unobtrusive early and authentic manifestation of that much anticipated but seldom realized genre—the pop opera), GODDESS OF SPRING is an amazing look at Disney on the verge of SNOW WHITE. Again, note the elaborate and masterfully concentrated vocal/orchestral score of Leigh Harline, and a tenor soloist who sounds like Kenny Baker.

SNOW WHITE's commentary is by Disney himself, augmented by animation historian John Canemaker, who discusses the Rotoscope process, and—more important—credits and sometimes quotes the various animators and design artists, in general giving a well rounded overview of the creative climate of the studio in the thirties.





**TOP LEFT:** Hayley Mills is surrounded by Nancy Olson, Karl Malden, and Jane Wyman in *POLLYANNA* (1960). High-powered company, indeed, but she still became a star. **BELOW LEFT:** Tommy Kirk goes fishing in the classic *SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON* (1960). **PAGE 75:** Kirk had some stiff competition, but he remains the most talented child actor Disney ever had, breaking hearts in *OLD YELLER* (1957).



bright Technicolor spotlight on the greatest period of stardom of Disney's first and most beloved contract player. During the years 1935 through roughly 1938, Mickey was frequently starred with Donald Duck and Goofy to form an animated comedy team the equal, in its way, to any human team the screen has ever seen. Often occupationally affiliated (1935's *MICKEY'S FIRE BRIGADE*, 1937's *CLOCK CLEANERS*, 1937's *LONESOME GHOSTS*, 1938's *THE WHALERS*), the Mouse, the Duck, and the Goof could just as commonly be found spending some quality leisure time together (1936's *ALPINE CLIMBERS*, 1937's *HAWAIIAN HOLIDAY*, 1937's *MOOSE HUNTERS*, 1938's *MICKEY'S TRAILER*). Whatever the activity, Mickey could be counted on to be resourceful and self-effacing (though sometimes stubborn), Donald ill-tempered and impulsive, and Goofy, at the height of his astonishing mental powers, half-wittedly singleminded.

*MICKEY MOUSE IN LIVING COLOR* contains all the above-mentioned cartoons, plus Donald's first appearance in Mickey's world (1935's *THE BAND CONCERT*) and the best of the Mouse's solo excursions (1936's *THRU THE MIRROR*, 1936's *MICKEY'S RIVAL*, and 1938's *BRAVE LITTLE TAILOR*). We even get a glimpse of "Mad Doctor" Mickey in 1937's *THE WORM TURNS*, in which Pluto is the unwilling victim of the Mouse's Jekyll and Hyde experimentation.

With introductions by Leonard Maltin, *MICKEY MOUSE IN LIVING COLOR* presents some of the finest cartoons ever made. Extras include pencil tests and an Easter egg in which you'll find Walt Disney himself.

—Richard Valley

As for *SNOW WHITE* itself, what more can one say? It remains Disney's masterpiece, the brilliant culmination of a decade of steadily escalating brilliance. The DVD provides a print worthy of that distinction, with some of the richest color and definition available on DVD. (A nice detail is that the soundtrack is also available in both remastered 5.1 surround sound and the original mono.) Collectively, the *SILLY SYMPHONIES* and *SNOW WHITE* DVD sets provide an overview of an incredible body of animated work which, to this day, has never been equaled, let alone surpassed even by the Disney studio itself.

—Ross Care

*MICKEY MOUSE IN LIVING COLOR* (Walt Disney Treasures, \$32.99) casts a

Long associated with creating magic, the Walt Disney Company once again worked its special wizardry on the DVD industry by presenting four of the most exciting collectable packages to hit the market. In the last 10 years of Walt's life, when his studio was at a peak of productivity, came a slew of family films that have stayed ingrained in the memories of many who grew up during that era. It's not unreasonable to suggest that, apart from 1964's *MARY POPPINS* (which is in a class by itself), the three best live-action films presented by Disney during his reign are *OLD YELLER* (1957), *POLLYANNA* (1960), and *SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON* (1960). (The enormously popular *THE PARENT TRAP*, released in 1961, is a lesser item.) Each works on the dual level of entertaining both children and parents, and each has stood the test of time as intelligently conceived and professional works. It would be exciting enough to have them available in these beautifully restored versions, but Disney has gone out of the way to remind us of the importance of these features by offering, in each package, a second disc full of extras that should make even the most jaded leap with joy.

*OLD YELLER* (\$29.99) is a classic boy-and-his-dog story, simply because it refuses to steer away from the cruel realities of life. Told in a direct fashion, it concerns a Texas family, left to fend for themselves while their dad (Fess Parker) is away, who adopt a stray pooch. Travis (Tommy Kirk), the older of the two boys, at first hates the destructive mutt, but comes to love him as his own, making the famous ending one of the most emotionally wrenching in film history. Dorothy McGuire, the cinema's most splendid example of motherhood, gives a great deal of heart to the story, but the film really belongs to 15-year old Kirk, one of the screen's most talented child actors.

Extras include reminiscences by cast members Kirk, Parker, Kevin Corcoran, and Beverly Washburn; interviews with T. Beck Gipson, the son of the author of the original 1956 novel, a visit to the Golden Oak Ranch, used as the location for this and dozens of other Disney films, "The Best Doggone Dog in the World," a 1957 episode from the *DISNEYLAND* series that features McGuire relaxing in her dressing room, explaining how she approached playing the character; an interview with Kirk about his overall career at the studio; trailers, radio spots, the entire story album; and footage of the dedication of an *Old Yeller* statue in Texas. Alas, since the film's director,



Robert Stevenson, passed away in 1986, his observations during the audio commentary are sorely missed.

**POLLYANNA (\$29.99)** was the picture that introduced most American audiences to one of Disney's best-loved stars, Hayley Mills. (She had won the role on the basis of her outstanding work in her first film, 1959's *TIGER BAY*, a British drama featuring her dad, John Mills). Unlike the three other films in this series, *POLLYANNA* was not a box-office success in its day, as many of the principals involved freely point out. However, it's evident that this is of little importance, considering the amount of affection for this production that pours forth from everyone interviewed on this disc. The story of an incredibly optimistic little girl (Mills), whose insistence on finding the good in everyday life changes the small town of Harrington for the better, this potentially icky material is pulled off with taste, heart, and charm, thanks to a brilliant cast (Agnes Moorehead as a crabby hypochondriac steals the show) and the talents of writer/director David Swift.

Swift dominates the extras, as well he should. He admits that this, his first big-screen assignment, remains his favorite of his films, calling it the one picture of his that he has no resistance to watching again. In extensive interviews filmed very shortly before his death (on New Year's Eve, 2001), Swift is articulate, informative, and concise on his intentions, giving all sorts of fascinating insights into what it was like to work for Walt Disney (Swift had started in the animation department) and to create a film in general. There's also some joyful participation from Mills (she and Swift do the audio commentary together), who still looks back on the experience with awe and affection. The other extras include a wonderfully detailed account of the film's restoration; an account by Nancy Olson (who looks sensational) of what it takes to make a film; a look at some *Pollyanna* collectibles dating back to the time of the original 1913 Eleanor H. Porter novel; various artwork used to sell the film, the intros and outros done by Disney for the movie's 1963 showing on *THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF COLOR*, home movies taken on the set; Mills recording of "Pollyanna's Theme," with lyrics by Swift; the Mickey Mouse short *THE NIFTY NINETIES* (1941), Swift's first animation job for the studio; and more. Curiously, no special attention is given to the juvenile Academy Award that Hayley Mills received for this film, the last such Oscar ever given, in fact.

**SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON** is one of the screen's great adventures, one of the more costly productions from the Disney studio, and one of their most financially successful and critically lauded works. Adapted freely from the 1865 Johann Wyss novel, this story of a family shipwrecked on a remote island, who discover that living far from the madness of everyday existence isn't such a bad thing, remains one of the great wish fulfillment tales. The cast includes John Mills and (once again) Dorothy McGuire as the

ideal parents; James MacArthur and Tommy Kirk as the two oldest, blossoming young sons (who captivate not only with their performances, but by dispensing with their shirts in a few scenes); Kevin Corcoran as the all-too-believably rambunctious youngest son; and pretty Janet Munro (of 1958's *THE CRAWLING EYE* fame) as a non-Robinson castaway.

The extras include a new documentary, *ADVENTURE IN THE MAKING*, hosted by the semiretired James MacArthur, and featuring interviews with Kirk, Corcoran, a 93-year-old Sir John Mills, director Ken Annakin, and others. Their stories of the hardships in making this movie on the unpredictable island of Tobago are entertaining and insightful. (Wait until you get a glimpse of Sessue Hayakawa being fanned by his personal geisha girls!) Also featured are color footage (with commentary by Hayley Mills) of the opening of the condensed version of the film's magnificent tree-house set in Disneyland; the "Escape to Paradise" episode from *DISNEYLAND*, documenting the making of the film with a song called "The Swiss Family Robinson Calypso" (1); an interview with MacArthur about his career at Disney; storyboard comparisons; a script excerpt; and (surprisingly) extensive scenes from the 1940 non-Disney film version starring Thomas Mitchell and Freddie Bartholomew. It's also worth noting that the reissue trailer shamefully excludes Tommy Kirk's name, which may or may not have had something to do with the actor being fired from the company in the intervening years.

**THE PARENT TRAP (\$29.99)** features a double helping of Hayley Mills in this comic story of long-separated twins who scheme to bring their divorced parents (Maureen O'Hara and Brian Keith) back together. Although the premise is cute and the cast game, there aren't a great many laughs, the approach is almost too sophisticated and dry for a Disney comedy, and the 129-minute length works against the enjoyment. (Swift hints that Walt Disney's resistance to cutting anything from his films might explain why certain studio productions are so lengthy.) But who am I to argue with the incredible success and durability of this property that became a huge money-maker and continues to evoke affectionate feelings from many people, especially girls?

The extras include a wonderful bit of reminiscing from director/writer David Swift with one of the great Disney animators, Ward Kimball; an excerpt from the *DISNEYLAND* episode "The Title Makers," showing how the charming puppet sequence was created and featuring Annette Funicello and Tommy Sands, in their *BABES IN TOYLAND* (1961) costumes recording the title song; the Donald Duck cartoon *DONALD'S DOUBLE TROUBLE* (1946), featuring a lookalike Duck with a voice not unlike Ronald Colman's; a re-

cording of the song "For Now, For Always" by Maureen O'Hara, a delightful moment capturing the songwriting Sherman Brothers singing their catchy "Let's Get Together," the song that supplies the film with its best sequence; poster art; trailers; and interviews with the still beautiful O'Hara, Mills, Swift, Joanna Barnes, and, most interesting of all, Susan Henning (-Schutte), who was Mills' on-screen double for scenes showing both twins, but received no billing. (Instead she received the ultimate honor, a Duckster, one of only three specially crafted Donald Duck trophies in existence.)

These four discs are the very model of the sort of special care and attention that the DVD industry can bring to classic titles. Certainly, every Disney fan should grab them, and any true fan of motion pictures in general should pick them up as well. These discs capture moments of history from one of the most important movie studios in the world and that is reason enough to rejoice.

—Barry Monush



## SCREEN & SCREEN

Continued from page 31

feast of features exploring *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* from inception to successful Broadway musical. For the younger set, there are plenty of games to be found, one of which requires clues gathered from the film's first disc. Entertainment and educational features are presented in a manner that never patronizes the viewer, but enlightens in a charming manner.

*BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* continues to weave its magic spell 10 years after its release, and this is a banner edition to be beloved by collectors everywhere.

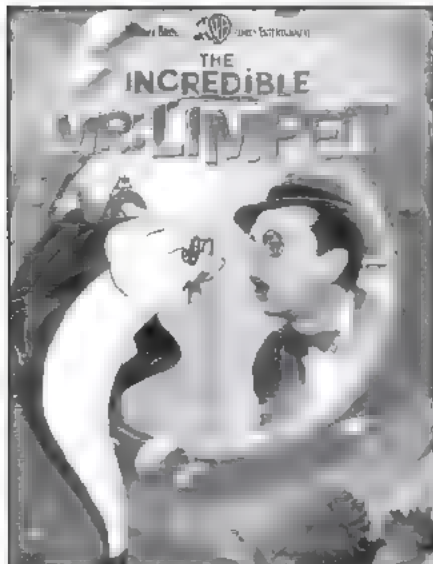
—Anthony Dale

### THE INCREDIBLE MR. LIMPET

Warner Home Video

\$24.98

Based on the 1945 novel by Theodore Pratt, *THE INCREDIBLE MR. LIMPET* (1964) is about a man who wants to be a



fish—and then, quite simply, becomes one. The movie opens in the early sixties, when two naval officers, Harlock and Stickel (Andrew Duggan and Jack Weston), look up top-secret Pentagon files relating to a “secret weapon” used during World War II. The contents of the files bring back strong memories for Stickel. Flashback to 1941, when Stickel was an enlisted man—a Navy engineer—and his pal, Henry Limpet (Don Knotts), was a Walter Mittyish bookkeeper, ineligible for military duty and henpecked at home by the formidable Bessie (Carole Cook). Life would be so much better, Mr. Limpet muses, if he were a fish and could have adventures under the sea.

And then, one day on a visit to Coney Island, he slips into the water, and suddenly undergoes a magical (and never explained) transformation: he becomes a fish! Once past the shock, Mr. Limpet is thrilled. He makes friends with a crab (voiced by Paul Frees), meets a lovely Ladyfish (voiced by Elizabeth MacRae), and decides he can help America by telling the

Navy where German subs are hiding. And he proceeds to do just that.

How to portray Mr. Limpet as a fish? Warner Bros. wisely brought in former Disney animator Vladimir (Bill) Tytla (1937's *SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS*, 1940's *PINOCCHIO*, 1940's *FANTASIA*), and he created a wonderfully expressive fish version of Mr. Limpet / Don Knotts. (Tytla fell ill during production on *MR. LIMPET*, and some of the animation was done by Bob McKimson, Hawley Pratt, and Gerry Chiniquy.)

*THE INCREDIBLE MR. LIMPET* was directed by Arthur Lubin, whose previous films included another conversational animal in the Francis the Talking Mule series, as well as the 1943 *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*. While *THE INCREDIBLE MR. LIMPET* doesn't quite make it into the ranks of great children's classics, it still holds its own 40 years later and should continue to delight youngsters (and young-at-heart grownups) for years to come. The leading characters are all strongly individualized (if also archetypal), and despite Mr. Limpet's joy at becoming what he always felt Nature meant him to be, the ending is unusually melancholy for a children's movie. There is no typical Hollywood happy ending.

The DVD contains both anamorphic 1.85 widescreen and fullscreen versions. The live-action Technicolor segments are rich and beautiful, but the animation doesn't come off as well—it seems muted in comparison. Extras include an “Introduction” with Don Knotts, cast and crew bios, and two features meant for the kids: “Get in the Sun with Henry Game” and “Henry Limpet's Fish Tank.” Best is *WEEKEND AT WICKI WACHEE*, filmed at a Florida resort with journalists, cast, crew, and pretty girls in mermaid costumes brought together for Mr. Limpet's underwater (literally!) premiere.

—Paula Vitaris

### NEWSIES

Disney DVD

\$29.99

Talk all you want about those Quentin Tarantino films—the most daring risk Hollywood took in the nineties was Disney's decision to make *NEWSIES* (1992). What could be less commercial in the nineties film scene than a traditional musical? Thankfully, *NEWSIES* is a no-excuses, flat-out, *real* musical in which human beings (not cartoons) open their mouths and sing. None of this *FLASH-DANCE* (1983) or *FOOTLOOSE* (1984) nonsense, with the filmmakers too embarrassed to have characters express themselves through song. The solidly American, utterly joyful and all-too-rare stylized mix of music, dance, and drama that is the Hollywood musical is vibrantly alive with this story of the real life 1899 New York City newsboys strike.

The Dead End Kids style and gritty city setting gives *NEWSIES* an unusually compelling atmosphere. After Disney's major successes with the animated musi-

cals *THE LITTLE MERMAID* (1989) and *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST* (1991), composer Alan Menken and lyricist Howard Ashman longed to work on a live-action musical. Disney rewarded them with *NEWSIES*. Unfortunately, Ashman died before much work could be done and Jack Feldman wound up collaborating with Menken. The lively score blasts off with



goose-bump-inducing harmonies (“Carrying the Banner”) and includes a memorable ballad (“Santa Fe”) and a rhythmic showstopper (“King of New York”).

The film's greatest asset is the cast. Christian Bale is so charismatic a lead that it's no surprise that he's become the actor with the largest internet following. Another dancing role in *SWING KIDS* (1993) and a chainsaw swinging role in *AMERICAN PSYCHO* (2000) continue to enlarge his fan club. David Moscow brings humor and heart to this costarring role. The fascinating supporting cast includes Bill Pullman, Michael Lerner, Max Casella, Michael Gorrigan, Robert Duval, and Ann-Margaret.

The film isn't perfect. While most musicals have book problems, this one has “library problems,” with long expository stretches parched for more numbers. But the invigorating Kenny Ortega/Peggy Holmes choreography (which the widescreen DVD showcases correctly) gives a gutsy lift whenever things slow down.

Predictably, *NEWSIES* was not a commercial success, but since then has developed quite a cult. Dozens of *NEWSIES* websites abound. These sites increased sales of the film's videotapes and laserdiscs. Wising up, Disney celebrated the film's 10th anniversary with a first-class DVD release. Features include audio commentary by director Ortega, information about the real 1899 newsboy strike, a rare 1992 promotional TV special, and extra backstage footage beyond the “making of” special. The only bad news is that Disney “muckety-mucked” up (to use newsie lingo) by not including any of the five deleted musical sequences cut before theatrical release. Still, it's nice to see Disney “carrying the banner” for this film, a worthy part of their legacy.

—Tom Lynch

### THE SAINT: SET 1

A&F Home Video

\$39.95

Self-mocking, suave, with his own moral code, Simon Templar, the man with the crooked halo, forever transformed the way audiences look at heroes and villains. In his literary incarnation, Templar—better known as The Saint—was among the



first of the flamboyant fictional antiheroes who could nonchalantly walk into a scene, comment on its absurdity, and then steal it outright. Indeed, before *The Saint*, fiction's stalwarts were upright, law-abiding, and eminently predictable, more interested in good works than wine, women, and wealth. But with his first appearance in Leslie Charteris' *Meet the Tiger* (1928), Simon Templar changed all that.

Templar begat secret agent James Bond and a whole line of the cinema's smart-aleck, vigilante protagonists. When Bruce Willis' cinematic tough guys mock pompous authority figures, they're echoing what *The Saint* first did in print over 70 years ago. Furthermore, *The Saint* is still a phenomenon in his own right. Since 1928, the 64 *Saint* books have sold over 40 million copies, while the character has appeared in 15 films (the first in 1938, starring Louis Hayward) and the last, in 1997, starring Val Kilmer), two TV series, six TV movies, a number of radio series (one with Vincent Price), comic strips, bubble-gum cards, and his own magazine.

To baby boomers, however, the most famous *Saint* is Roger Moore, star of the 1962-69 British TV series, who later went on to play James Bond. At its best, the Moore program captured the spirit of the original stories, which were fast-paced, intricately plotted, and highly unpredictable, dealing with stolen jewels, unexplained murders, and hair's breadth escapes, all done in a tongue-in-cheek style that readers found uniquely brash. The TV series, newly released by A&E Home Video on DVD, is not quite as groundbreaking, but offers fast-paced entertainment nonetheless.

There were 114 episodes produced, and some of the best are to be found in the first three seasons of 71 black-and-white entries. It's unfortunate, therefore, that A&E chose its first grouping from the variable fourth season, the series' first in color. "The Convenient Monster" is a conventional whodunit, with Templar in

Scotland investigating murders that have apparently been committed by the Loch Ness Monster. "The Reluctant Revolution" is slightly better, taking *The Saint* to San Pablos, a country ruled by a dictator and his right-hand man, a mysterious American (played by *THE FUGITIVE*'s Barry Morse—Inspector Gerard—in a nasty change of pace). Though it contains the series' typically well-staged fights, the episode comes across as naive—a Boy's Adventure view of revolutions. "The Russian Prisoner," on the other hand, is silly: a dated cold-war tale in which *The Saint* assists a beautiful woman who wants to help a Russian scientist defect.

Fortunately, the set also includes three top-notch installments. In "The Helpful Pirate," Templar gets involved with confidence tricksters as he attempts to rescue a kidnapped British scientist. Amusingly, he moonlights for the British secret service because, says the spy chief who recruits him, all "my other operatives are busy." "Interlude in Venice," a tale of an Italian vendetta, is tightly written, with Bondian connections (including Lois Maxwell, the original Miss Moneypenny, as the heroine's stepmother). Like Bond, Simon wears a white dinner jacket and wins big playing baccarat at a casino.

The best of the lot is "The Queen's Ransom," a superior episode that echoes *THE 39 STEPS* (1935) and other Alfred Hitchcock films. After saving a king-in-exile's life, Templar is recruited to retrieve a boxload of diamonds. The job is complicated by his traveling companion, a spoiled model-turned-queen (Dawn Addams) who puts on airs. The story twists and turns very cleverly, with the pair eluding pursuers by plane, car, and foot throughout Europe (actually studio sets, backed by stock footage). There are some terrific action set pieces (The *Saint* driving a car backwards down a curvy mountain road to escape gun-toting Soviet villains) and good character development.

The episodes are beautifully presented, with crisp colors and excellent sound (the better to hear Edwin Astley's memorable "Saint Theme.") The extras are slight: a photo gallery, trailers, and a Roger Moore biography/filmography. By and large, though, fans won't be disappointed.

—Tom Soter

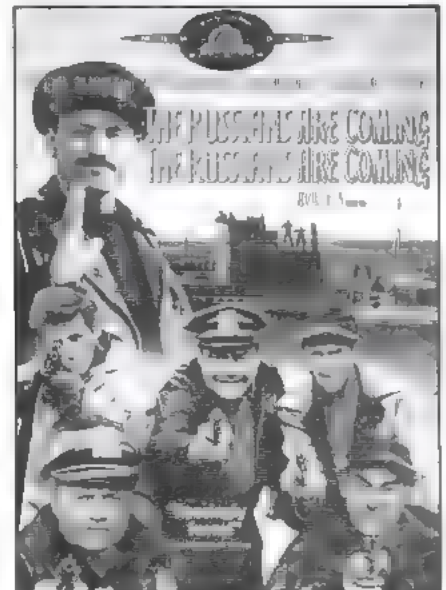
**THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING!  
THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING!  
MGM Home Entertainment  
\$19.98**

Emergency! Everybody to get from street and buy this DVD. The Cold War comes right to our shores when a Soviet submarine runs aground off the little, sleepy Massachusetts island of Gloucester. The captain (Theodore Bikel) of the Soviet vessel has never seen the United States before, and he wants to have a closer look. He gets one.

**THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING... THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING** (1966) stars Alan Arkin as Lieutenant Rozanov of the Soviet submarine force. Rozanov leads a

band of sailors in an attempt to find a "powered motored boat" to rescue his submarine, finding his way to the home of Walt and Elspeth Whittaker (Carl Reiner and Eva Marie Saint). His cover is soon blown and the whole town believes it is under Soviet attack; just ask Muriel Everett (Doro Merande), the post mistress.

With occasional time out for a love story between the Whittaker's daughter and a young Soviet (Andrea Dromm and John Philip Law), the film's farcical structure is soon brimming over with vehicular mishaps, mad motorcycle drivers, The American Legion (led by Paul Ford), a horse bent on driving its rider (Ben Blue) insane, a police chief (Brian Keith) deter-



mined to remain calm whatever the circumstances, a chief's assistant (Jonathan Winters) hell bent on thwarting the Russians, and a small boy (Johnny Whitaker) trapped on a church steeple. Filmed during the Cold War, the comedy offers an important lesson—that two opposing nations can come together as one in a mutual effort to avoid national disaster.

Director/Producer Norman Jewison deftly puts the brilliant cast through its paces. Presented in letterbox format, the DVD transfer is beautiful. The color is vivid, the audio brilliant, and the film looks like it was made only yesterday. Special features include original theatrical trailers and an interview with Norman Jewison on the casting and making of this charming comedy.

Dan Clayton

**CAT WOMEN OF THE MOON  
MISSILE TO THE MOON  
Image Entertainment  
\$24.95 each**

In the pantheon of "so bad they're good" sci-fi flicks, **CAT WOMEN OF THE MOON** (1953) is right up in the top of the dregs. Truly it is one of the absolute triumphs of bad filmmaking, a delirious dream impression of space with a lack of

*Continued on page 82*





Having made several Columbia Horrors separately, Peter Lorre and Boris Karloff were teamed for *THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU* (1942).

## COLUMBIA HORRORS

*Continued from page 71*

joins the search party for the missing Mrs. Marcy and is away from her direct influence, Blair becomes a man deeply and obviously guilt-ridden by his inadvertent culpability. It's only in the film's final moments, when he straps his daughter into his infernal contraption ("Every time Helen's tried to speak to me since she died, Ann has been somewhere nearby!") that he permanently retreats into madness.

The three key scenes that so completely etch *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* into the memories of audiences are those that show us the fruits of Blair's labors—the interior of his laboratory. The buildup to the revelation of just where his experiments have led is wonderfully achieved by Dmytryk, letting us discover the reality at the same time as Mrs. Marcy (who has agreed to look around for the sheriff). Sneaking into the lab, she slowly, hesitantly, examines the equipment and, most importantly, the shrouded figures seated around a table at its center. The viewer suspects what is beneath those shrouds, but that hardly diminishes the impact when she pulls back a single covering to see one of the five missing corpses encased in what can best be described as a diving suit from hell. In her horror, she backs into the switch that activates the machinery, resulting in one of the most startling images in the history of the horror film. The equipment starts roaring, a strange wind comes up, and the shrouds are sucked from the bodies, which are revealed to be seated around the table like persons at a traditional séance. As the roaring of the wind increases, the figures are drawn inward toward the table and a vortex (which swallows the shrouds) appears at its center. There will be two more instances of this effect—and each is effective—but nothing quite equals the impact of this.

Two points about the approach taken by *THE DEVIL COMMANDS* are worth noting. In the first place, despite the fact that the sequences are themselves rather frantic with the sound and wind effects working full-time, they are all scored with music that doesn't match precisely the action. Rather than resort to music that would goose the excitement, the film uses an eerie organ piece that stresses the inherent weirdness of the action, not the action itself. In the second place, the viewer is never directly told—even in pseudo-scientific double-talk—how the machine is designed to work. Instead, we're left to work it out for ourselves that Blair has constructed a kind of scientific séance, with the corpses used somewhat in the manner of radio tubes. The scientific aspect of this is certainly open to question, but the effect is not. It's the high watermark of the series and one of the essential moments in the entire genre.

\*\*\*  
Rather than continue the Mad Doctor films in earnest, Columbia opted to end the series with an obvious attempt to cash in on Karloff's popularity on Broadway as Jonathan Brewster in *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*. Teaming him with Peter Lorre, the studio's resulting film, *THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU*, is a minor delight that has often been vilified as a comedown for the series (by enthusiasts with roseate-tinted memories of *THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES* and *BEFORE I HANG*) and an unabashed rip-off *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE* (despite the fact that the similarities only extend to a cellarful of "corpses" and the presence of Peter Lorre as Karloff's Dr. Einsteinish partner in mad doctor-dom). There's certainly no connection between Karloff's Jonathan Brewster and his lovably dotty Prof. Nathaniel Billings ("Doctor of biochemistry, Century College, before it went under") in *THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU*. On its own terms, the movie's really a lot of fun, even if it's not exactly brilliant or particularly inspired.

The plot hinges on Billings' attempts to create a superman to aid the war effort ("He would destroy Berlin, he would throttle Tokyo")—an idea hampered not only by his own basic ineptitude, but by financial considerations, owing to a more than pricey mortgage ("Twenty-three and one-half percent compounded semiannually") held by Dr. Lorenz (Peter Lorre). To solve this situation, Billings sells his home to wide-eyed antique enthusiast Winnie Slade (Miss Jeff Donnell), with the proviso that he be allowed to stay on and complete his experiments, even though he doesn't attempt to explain his work. "I'm afraid it's completely beyond expression in words that you could comprehend," he tells her—an idea she accepts without question! Even with money matters about to be resolved, Billings still has an adversary in Lorenz, who considers his experiments to be unorthodox, despite the fact that Lorenz, who fulfills nearly every public position in town, made his own fortune in Shark Oil Hair Restorer. "Where is the hair follicle that can resist 2,000 International Units of Vitamin A?" he blusters, only to have Billings show him the top of his head and proclaim, "Right there!" Finally learning what Billings is up to, Lorenz falls right in with his scheme. "You mean, you're interested in the biochemical shortcut?" asks Billings. "Interested? Even since I was a child . . . from my earliest youth," Lorenz assures him.

The things that are good about *THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU* don't lie in its plot, which is merely functional—and not always that. Once the story proper gets underway, the film tends to meander aimlessly before arriving at an almost arbitrary climax. However, there are so many nice touches along the way, that it hardly matters. From the moment the film starts, with its jaunty main title music by an uncredited John Leipold (the bulk of the film is scored with library track), it's obvious that *THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU* is going to be a goofy, good-natured affair that's hard to dislike. It is certainly that, though surprisingly—especially for the final film in a series—a good deal of care was afforded the production. There's something ironic about the fact that this little film has quite the most impressive laboratory in any of the series entries, except for *THE DEVIL COMMANDS*.

The real joy of the film, however, lies in the teaming of Karloff and Lorre, who play off each other effortlessly and seem to be having a fine time in the bargain. In many ways, Lorre steals the show with his delightfully corrupt small town politico. His is the far more fantastic characterization—even to his mode of dress, which makes him into something of a Hungarian-accented cross between Colonel Sanders and Marryin' Sam. That he also carries a Siamese kitten with him in his coat pocket ("She has the most amazing instinct for crime and corruption") is another neatly strange touch. Lorre's dialogue is smartly written and he milks it for all it's worth. Examining the array of nicely preserved corpses from Karloff's botched efforts, he



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merely remarks, "As a coroner, I must say you have already outmoded formaldehyde!" Apprised that one of the "martyrs" used to sell encyclopedias, he concludes, "Oh, I'm sure he didn't mind very much."

Karloff has less to work with, being given a stock addle-brained scientist role, but he makes it all seem far more original and fresh than it is in any number of effortless ways. Strolling past Winnie and her ex husband, Bill (Larry Parks, before he became Al Jolson), in the midst of a raging argument, he smiles and mutters, "That's right. Just make yourself at home, make yourself at home." Encountering his fifth failed superman experiment, he clucks over the cadaver with a simple, "Cold as a mackerel. Dear dear, dear." Perhaps his finest moment, though, is a bit in which he doesn't say a word. Faced with a shortage of candidates for his experiments, Billings and Lorenz repair to the front yard and bemoan their lot in lawn chairs, plunged into silent gloom until they hear the sound of footsteps coming up the path. As Billings realizes that this is test subject number six, a small smile flickers on his face, before transforming into a beaming grin by the end of the take. It's a lovely bit in a film full of such bits. That the individual components finally collapse due to an utter lack of story structure (made up for to some degree by Lorre's curtain line) is unfortunate, but they nonetheless leave the genre fan with much to smile about.

With THE BOOGIE MAN WILL GET YOU, Karloff's Columbia contract was up and that was that for the Mad Doctor series. For his part, Lorre returned to Warner Bros., where THE MALTESE FALCON (1941) had made him very much in demand. This left Columbia completely in the lurch so far as horror stars were concerned, and it seemed for a time that the studio was simply going to bow out of the genre altogether. However, a couple years later, they'd be back with one of the decade's most interesting horror offerings, which would also turn out to be one of the last true hurrahs of the genre's often ill-used "master of horror," Bela Lugosi.



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VHS: Dateline Diamonds; Robert Bresson's Au Hasard Balthazar; Murder, Inc.; Groupie Girl; Figures in a Landscape; Dirk Diggler Story; Violent Saturday; Tony Clifton on the Dinah Shore Show; Lost Gay Tapes of John Holmes; Hannibal Brooks; Ice; Angel Face; Bunny Lake is Missing; Marjoe; Sunrise; Where the Sidewalk Ends; the Flicker; F.T.A.; Chel; Kildozer

DVD: Punishment Park; Satan Was A Lady; The Kriminal; Manson Massacre; The Image; Invasion USA; The Big Combo; Seconds; Motor Psycho; Wadd; Captain Scarlet; Blue Murder; Guts of a Virgin; I Am Cuba; Ichi the Killer; Salo 120 Days of Sodom; Twin Peaks TV Pilot; The Eye; The Beast; Guru the Mad Monk; Exorcism; Mantis in Lace; Touch of Evil; Audition



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Continued from page 67

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EK: He was completely destroyed. That was a terrible time in our history, a terrible time. It was a shameful thing.

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SS: What was it like appearing in the *Andy Hardy* films?

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SS: Mickey Rooney was a favorite back then.

AR: Mickey is probably the most talented human being I've ever met! He was endowed at birth with talents in absolutely every art. He never had a music lesson in his life, yet he composed a four-piece orchestral suite that was played on **THE FORD SYMPHONY HOUR**. That happened when he did **YOUNG TOMMY**! SS: He went to the premiere in Detroit, and the Ford people gave a dinner party. Sometime during the evening, Mickey wandered over to a piano and sat down and began to play. Mr. Ford liked what he was playing and said, "What is that called?" Mickey said, "Well, I haven't

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SS: Did you ever meet any of his wives?

AR: Oh, yes, indeed—I know quite a few of them. (Laughs)

SS: *Anna Corbin*, *Martha Vickers*...

AR: She married Mickey for about 20 minutes. I was in London at *The Savoy* when Mickey and Ann Miller were doing **SUGAR BABIES** and they did a British version of **THIS IS YOUR LIFE** for Mickey. They flew all his kids over and, for some of them, it was the first time they met, because they all had different mothers. He had incredibly beautiful daughters, very tall because he liked tall girls and beautiful women.

SS: How did you become involved with **GONE WITH THE WIND**?

AR: Well, I was minding my own business. I was on a train with my mother. We were in the dining car, my mother trotting on ahead and I saw David Selznick coming through the car that I would be passing through. I'd met him at MGM and I knew he was Mr. Mayer's son-in-law, but there was something I wanted to say to him. I waited in that little connecting space between cars and, as he walked through the door, the unfortunate man, I pounced on him. I said, "Mr. Selznick, I want to tell you something about **GONE WITH THE WIND**." He looked startled. He thought I was going to hit him up for a job. I said, "You must tell your makeup man to throw away his tweezers. They're going through this stage at the studio where everybody has their eyebrows plucked like Marlene Dietrich and it just empties the face of expression. If you remember, Margaret Mitchell wrote about the raven's-wing sweep of Scarlett O'Hara's eyebrows." Well, he reached in his pocket and pulled out one of his famous memo cards, and he nodded seriously and scribbled a little thing and thanked me very much and went on into the dining car. And in a book of the Selznick memos, that memo is in there.

SS: So you influenced the film right off?

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SS: Vivien Leigh hadn't been cast at that point. Did you want to read for Scarlett?

AR: No! Oh, mercy, no, no, no!

SS: Did you get along well with your on-screen sisters?

AR: Oh, I do. See Evelyn Keyes. She's a wonderful writer, her first book was my



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favorite. It's called *Scarlett O'Hara's Younger Sister*. And Vivien was possibly the hardest working human being I've known in my life. That dear little thing—thank heavens that David Selznick shot the picture in sequence because it wouldn't have worked otherwise. She did indeed look 16 when she sat on the porch with the Tarleton twins. She still had those little plump cheeks, but we all watched her lose weight as the film progressed. Every day her costumes had to be taken in a little more. The hours were 12 long, they were just terrible. We worked Saturdays. It was six days a week and then hurry right back. By the time we got to the scenes where Scarlett has married Rhett, she looked like she'd grown up. She'd aged 40!

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AR: Yes, because I was in many of the early shots, and they shot virtually in sequence. He was such a giving, such a generous man. When he left the picture—not of his own doing, of course—he told both Olivia and Vivien, "Any scenes you're worried about, call me the day before they're to be shot. As soon as you get off work, come straight to my house and I'll give you dinner and we'll go over these scenes."

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## SCREEN AND SCREEN

*Continued from page 77*

logic all its own. It has a few clever ideas, stupidly presented—and moves along fast enough that there is never a moment when the jaw is not dropped in mute astonishment. Most significantly, its story of astronauts landing on a manless planet of monsters and maidens is so irresistible that it's been reused countless times. There was even a remake from Richard Cunha, made for the same motion-picture company a mere six years later, titled *MISSILE TO THE MOON* (1959), which is, amazingly, just as so-bad-it's-good as *CAT WOMEN*. In fact, a whole evening could easily be wasted arguing which is better at being worse.

The plot of both has the usual crew of four men and one woman on their way to the moon. The men in *CAT WOMEN* are certainly the more notable B-movie cast; Kip (Victor Jory, looking like a dour cigar-store Indian), dim-witted Captain Laird (Sonny Tufts!), doomed greedhead Walt (Douglas Fowley), and the "juvenile," Doug (William Phipps). Helen (Marie Windsor) is the navigator, whose telepathic contact with the cats leads her to the hidden pleasure palace where the cat women dance and serve food. (A Hindu statue adds an air of otherworldly mystery.) The crew encounters a giant spider on visible strings. Doug falls in love with Lambda (Susan Morrow), the kitten of the cat women. She tips the earthlings off to danger, and they blast their way to freedom, leaving Lambda dead in their wake as a casualty of love.

In *MISSILE*, there are two real juveniles, delinquent greedhead Gary (Tommy Cook) and Lon (Gary Clarke, a cross between Ricky Nelson and Art Garfunkel). Determined scientist Dirk (Michael Whalen) guides them to the location of the hidden pleasure palace where the

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moon women dance and serve food. (An Aztec calendar on the wall adds an air of otherworldly mystery.) Lon falls in love with the gamine Zema (Leslie Parrish), who warns him of danger. The space-boys slink off to freedom, leaving Zema behind as a casualty of love. Oh, and they encounter a giant spider on strings. Order is restored, and the threat of the feminine is symbolically reentered.

Extras on these discs are minimal. *CAT WOMEN* has only a trailer and some inner notes; *MISSILE* has a great photo gallery that includes backstage shots, moon women pinups in color, and the girls posing with the leering producer. As far as transfers go, both discs look beautiful. *MISSILE* especially has brilliant contrasts, making the painted backdrops all the more obvious. As for *CAT WOMEN*, I was glad to be able to see the oiled-up slickness of the cat women's hair in minute detail. Both source prints have moments of age and wear, with ample vertical lines, jump cuts, thumb-prints, water marks, holes, burns, lines, splices, and scratches—but thanks to the sterling transfer, it's nothing too distracting. The sound is in glorious mono, with a little hiss, but enough body to let the horrific scores breathe and warble. In other words, each disc is perfect in its imperfection. If you think it's ridiculous (or you're too cheap) to get both titles, and are wondering which of the two to buy, let me sum it up this way—*MISSILE* has rock men, *CAT WOMEN* has Sonny Tufts. It's a no-brainer, either way.

Erich Kuersten

**RETURN TO THE BLUE LAGOON**  
Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment  
\$19.95

*RETURN TO THE BLUE LAGOON* is the belated 1991 sequel to 1980's *THE BLUE LAGOON*, which starred the frequently nude Brooke Shields and Christopher At-

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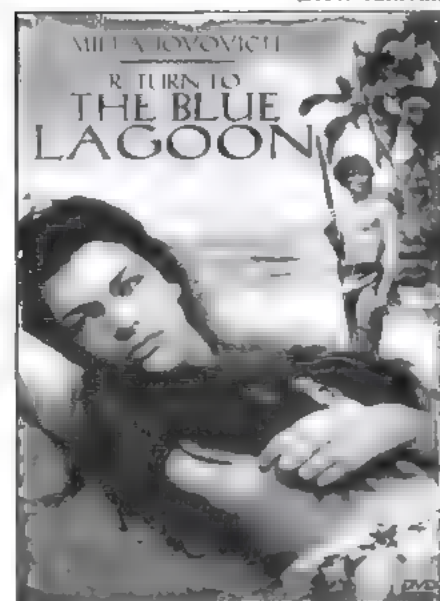
**WANTED:** photos of Peter Firth, Jeremy Brett, Shane Briant, and John Fraser as Dorian Gray. E-mail [Reditor@scarletstreet.com](mailto:Reditor@scarletstreet.com)

kins. (Atkins, at least, was nude; Shields had a body double.)

The sequel picks up with the characters played by Shields and Atkins rescued at sea—though “rescued” is a relative term, since they’re dead. Their son, Richard (Jackson Barton), survives, however, and soon finds himself back on the isle with the blue lagoon, along with the adult Sarah (Lisa Pelikan) and her child, Lilli (Courtney Phillips). Eventually, Sarah dies and Richard and Lilli grow up to be Milla Jovovich and Brian Krause.

We arrive at the crux of the matter. Except for a brief glimpse of Jovovich's breasts, the two stars remain discreetly dressed throughout the film, which is like making a musical without songs. That's all one need know about *RETURN TO THE BLUE LAGOON*, but I'll add that the DVD isn't even letterboxed.

—Drew Sullivan



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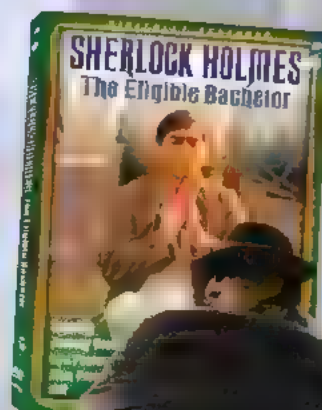
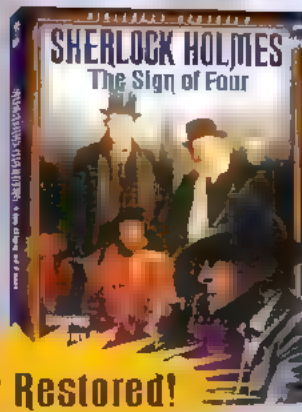
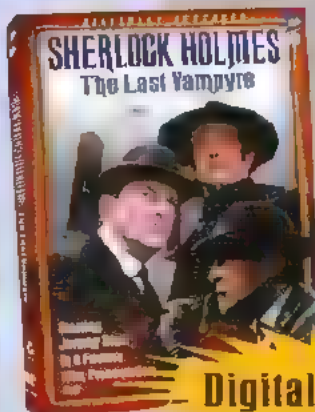
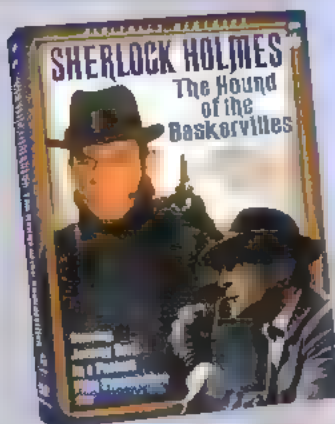
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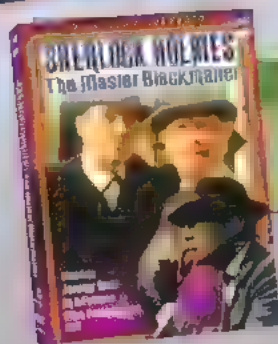
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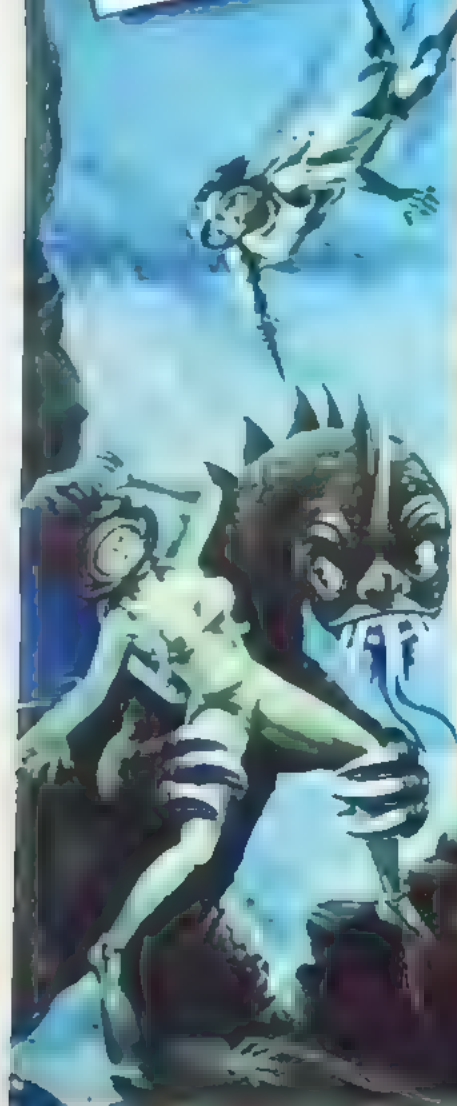
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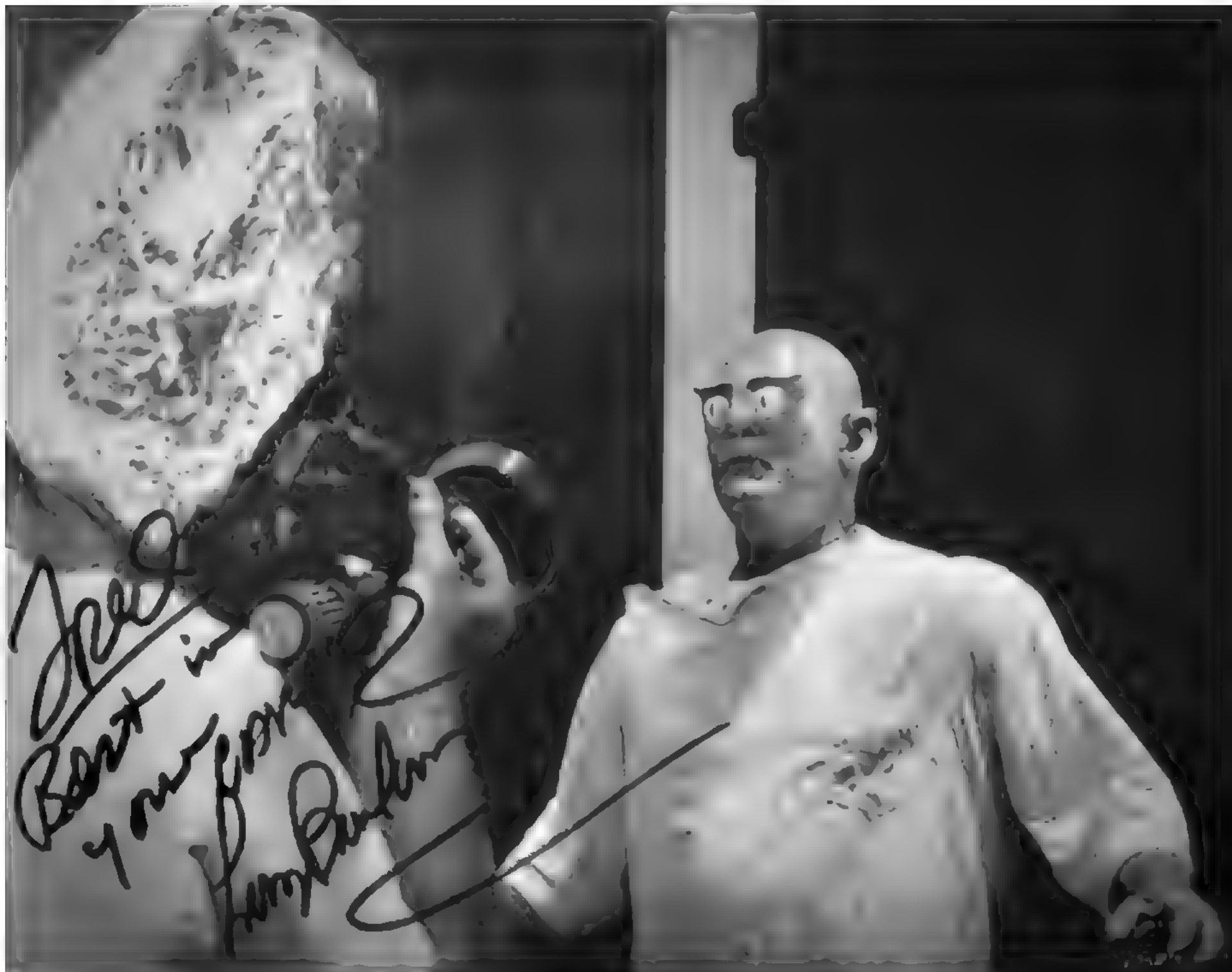
























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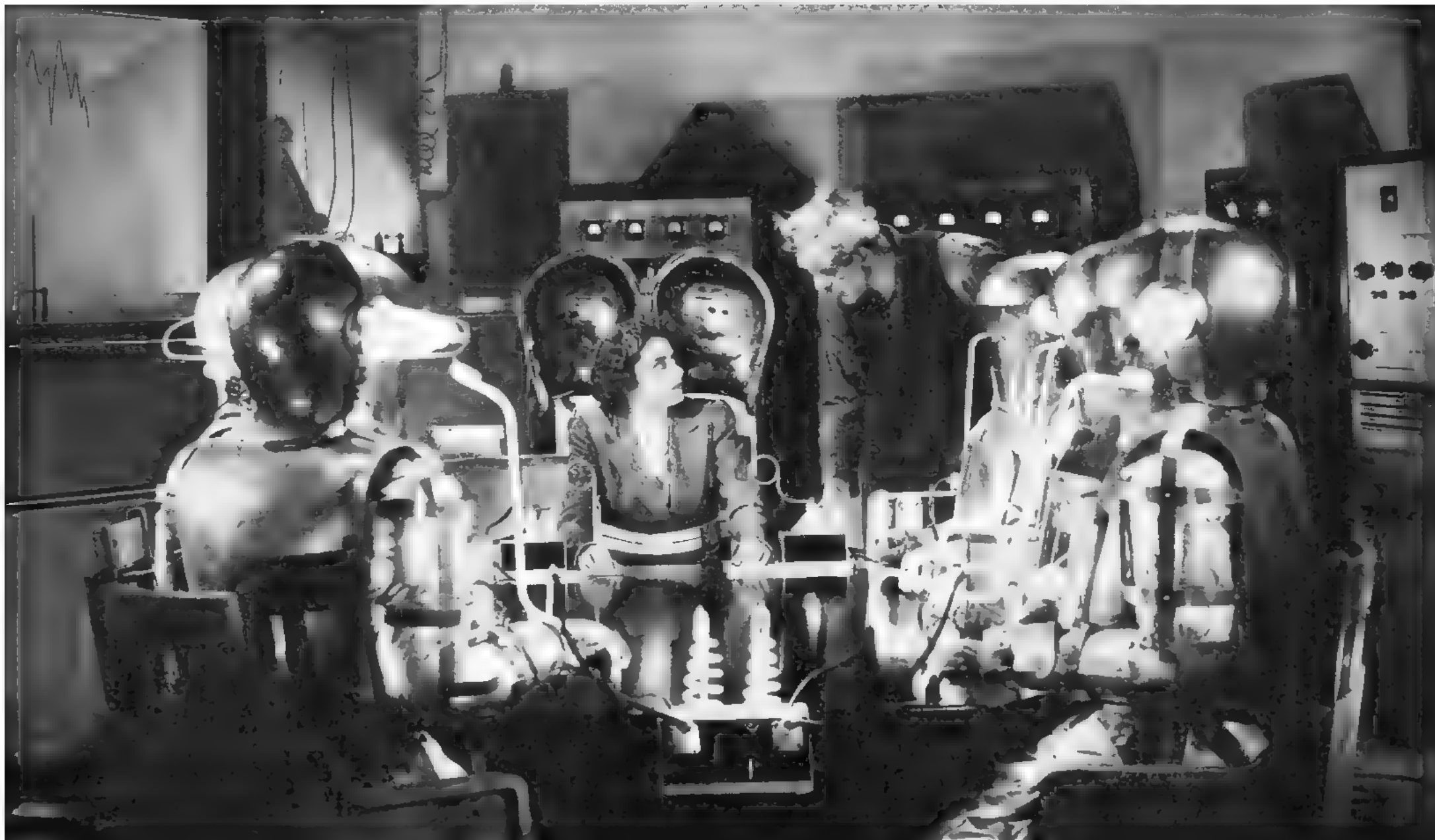












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